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Kent on Sunday

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MPs attacked for a 'wall of silence over unfair' MoD Gurkha cuts

By Marijke Cox
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

GURKHA rights campaigners have demanded action from Kent's MPs over "brutal" job cuts to the loyal Nepalese soldiers.

Peter Carroll, who led the high-profile campaign for Gurkha rights alongside Absolutely Fabulous actress Joanna Lumley, accused the county's MPs of failing to come forward and show support for the brigade.

Kent is home to the 2nd Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles, based at Shorncliffe, Folkestone, and nearly half of the soldiers of the Maidstone-based 36 Engineers Regiment are Queen's Gurkha Engineers.

Last year around 140 Gurkhas – a large portion from Kent – were made redundant as part of military spending cuts.

In the second tranche of cuts announced this week, the Ministry of Defence revealed that some 400 Gurkha jobs are to be lost. It is not yet known where the cuts will fall.

Mr Carroll said: "We've got 17 MPs in Kent and I've not seen any of them step forward. Now it's down to us to fight this. I've re-launched my Save the Gurkha petition – I believe that people power works."

In 2010 Mr Carroll and Ms Lumley were successful in their fight to secure equal settlement rights for Gurkhas who served more than four years in the British Army.

"Joanna and I fought a campaign to get Gurkha 'old timers' the right to live in the country that they were prepared to fight for and possibly die for," said Mr Carroll.

"The Army is claiming that because Gurkhas can now serve for longer, there are too many. The change of length of service was not due to our campaign.

"However, whatever the reason that

Continued on page 2

19 YEARS OF CRYING

HELP: Father's nursing home plea to catch killer of daughter Claire Tiltman SEE INSIDE

PETS

Cat charity's plea for help

A Tunbridge Wells cat charity is facing a crisis after a huge increase in the number of unwanted pets being handed in.

People willing to offer new homes to the pets are desperately needed, and owners struggling to pay bills in tough economic times is being blamed for the problem. PAGE 7

HEALTH

Win a health gold medal

SEVENOAKS Olympic hopeful Tom Bosworth has backed a new health campaign designed to encourage people to do more exercise.

Race-walking star Tom, 22, holds the 5km outdoor British walk record and is in training for 20km race at the London 2012 Olympics. PAGE 20

SPORT

Overseas trip likely for Kent

PART of Kent's pre-season preparations are expected to take place overseas, in response to the earliest-ever start to a county championship season.

The squad, who trained in Dubai last spring, need reliable conditions to get ready for the new campaign. PAGE 62

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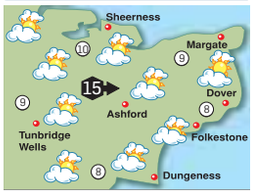

TODAY: Overcast and windy. However it will remain largely dry. Max temp 7-10C (45-50F). **TONIGHT:** Mainly dry with clear spells. Min temp 6-9C (43-48F).

TODAY'S HIGH TIDE (Metres)

Dover	10.14	6.3	22.38	6.5
Margate	11.12	4.6	23.32	4.6
St Mary's	03.45	5.5	16.12	5.3

WEEK AHEAD

Monday	Max 9C	Min 5C
Tuesday	Max 10C	Min 6C
Wednesday	Max 9C	Min 5C
Thursday	Max 9C	Min 3C
Friday	Max 8C	Min 4C
Saturday	Max 8C	Min 3C

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CRIME

Dad's desperate plea 19 years after his daughter's murder

By Ed Hill
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NINETEEN years after the murder of 16-year-old Claire Tiltman in Greenhithe, her devastated father has made an emotional plea to bring the teenager's killer to justice.

Speaking from his bed in a nursing home, 62-year-old Cliff Tiltman, said: "It would mean everything to me to find out, after all these years, who did this to Claire.

"It's been a long time, but I've never given up hope and never will.

"I can't begin to put into words how this has affected our family. Claire has gone. Her mum has gone. There is now only me.

"I try to stay strong but will still hide and cry my eyes out for an hour. She would have been 35 now – she was a good kid. I miss her to bits."

Dartford Grammar School pupil Claire was 16 years old when she was stabbed in an alleyway just off the busy A226 London Road in Greenhithe on January 18, 1993.

She had been on her way to visit a friend when she was attacked between 6pm and 6.30pm – a time when many road and rail commuters were returning home from work.

A major murder investigation was launched but her killer has never been caught and convicted.

The case remains open and has been subject to a number of reviews by cold case detectives from the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate.

A number of new leads and evidence have been uncovered over the years which have been explored, and officers say they remain committed to bringing Claire's killer to justice.

Det Chief Insp Rob Vinson, from the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate said: "If, as I believe, the killer is a local person, someone must know who he or she is. At the very least, someone must have strong suspicions and has a duty to come forward. The breakthrough we, and Cliff needs, could be just one phone call away.

"Advances in technology around DNA mean we can review opportunities which were not available to detectives 20 years ago.

"All unsolved murders within Kent are reviewed every two years. They are never closed and the fact we constantly review them demonstrates that we are determined to bring offenders to justice, no matter how long ago the crimes were committed."

Claire was an only child. Her mother, Lin, died aged 56 in 2008.

If you have information which may help with the investigation, contact the incident room on 01634 884010. Alternatively, call Kent Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555111.

LEFT ON HIS OWN: Widower Cliff Tiltman made the appeal from his nursing home bed 19 years after his daughter Claire was stabbed to death in an alleyway

GURKHAS

Cuts are 'throwing loyal soldiers on the scrap heap'

Continued from front page

they now serve longer, it seems ridiculous to force highly skilled soldiers out of the Army.

"Gurkhas are incredibly loyal and more of them tend to serve their whole term than other parts of the Army.

"What reward does our country give them for that loyalty and commitment? It looks like they're going to be thrown on the scrap heap."

Ms Lumley added: "Any feeling that the Gurkhas are being unfairly hit will cause a great disquiet with people across Britain."

But Conservative MP for Folkestone and Hythe Damian Collins said the Government was committed to the Gurkhas.

"The Gurkhas are and will remain an integral part of the Armed Forces. They are here to stay and Shorncliffe is not at risk. This is about numbers," he said.

"I have, however, written to defence secretary Philip Hammond explaining my concerns about the redundancies, which is a cut of 10 per cent in the Gurkhas.

"They play a unique and important role and we're using them more than ever at the moment. They are also an important part of life in my constituency.

"I have asked Philip Hammond why the redundancies are being made and in particular why they are falling so heavily on the Gurkhas at a time when we seem to need their services more than ever."

In his letter he asked the Government to reaffirm its commitment to the future of the Gurkhas in the British Armed Forces.

MP for Maidstone Helen Grant said there was currently little information about the changes that would affect each regiment.

"I am making investigations accordingly. I have not, however, received any communication or requests from constituents or serving personnel in this constituency regarding these or previous redundancies relating to the MoD's current savings plans," she said.

"On a general point, as with all service personnel, it is of course right that the Gurkhas should be treated fairly and I have communicated this in writing to the minister on more than one occasion."

The MoD must reduce the size of the Army by 7,000 people and both the Navy and RAF by 5,000 by 2015.

To join the campaign see www.savethegurkhas.co.uk.

REDUNDANT: Our Gurkhas are to be cut by a massive 10 per cent

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HISTORY

Town's copy of Magna Carta has 'Fort Knox' level security

SAFE AND SOUND: There are only 17 original medieval copies of the Magna Carta left in the world. One copy was sold in the US in 2007, for $20 million

By Ed Hill
ed.hill@archant.co.uk

IT MAY not be widely known, but Faversham has one of the most important historial documents linked to this country's democracy ever produced.

The town was granted a copy of the Magna Carta given to it in 1300 by the then-king Edward I.

The charter was written by medieval scribes specifically for the town. At the foot of the document it says in Latin that it is for the Barons of the Port of Faversham.

It is an official Royal copy of the document that the barons of England forced King John to sign in 1215 at Runnymede, sealed with King Edward's official wax seal. It is thought that only 17 original medieval copies are left in the world.

The charter established the right of Englishmen to be punished only under the feudal law of the time and not just at the whim of the K ing.

It sets out the principles of freedom under law and is the basis for legal and political systems around the world.

Recently town chiefs discussed how the document should be best looked after.

Security around the charter was upgraded after a copy of a similar document sold for $20 million in America in 2007.

Susan Brockman, Faversham's town clerk, said: "Our security is really now at Fort Knox level, we really wanted to keep it in the town.

"It is impossible to put a value on it. It's just a really lucky that we have something like this in Faversham."

The town was issued the Magna Carta because of its connection with the Cinque Ports of Kent and Sussex which were given special status because of the role in protecting the country's coast from invasion.

Its historical importance was initially overlooked in the town's archive; not surprisingly as Faversham has one of the largest collections of municipal charters in the UK. Its first charter dates back to 1252, when Henry III gave local barons immunity from the payment of certain tolls and customs.

The charters were often used as a way of raising money or military equipment for the King.

Another one issued by Edward I in 1278, demanded that the barons of Faversham provide him with 57 ships for 15 days of the year.

The last charter dates back to 1685, and recognises the establishment of the town's Queen Elizabeth Grammar School which is still educating children today.

The 700-year-old document is now safely kept in a fire-proof cabinet with other documents and increased insurance.

Ms Brockman said: "In truth the document really has no real value at all because we would never sell it and we would not be able to get permission to sell it in America, as happened in 2007."

Laurence Young, from the Faversham Enterprise Partnership, said: "The charter is owned by town council and they are doing the right thing in insuring the security around Faversham's charters is as good as it can be.

"They are also doing the right thing in exploring the ways in which the charters may be displayed and used in the future as they have a lot of potential for tourism."

■ **More news and sport at www.yourswale.co.uk.**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Towers to come down

ONE of Kent's most distinctive landmarks is set for demolition. Thanet Council's planning committee has agreed the cooling towers at the old Richborough power station can be knocked down by BFL Management Ltd, which wants to clear away the massive chimneys so it can build an energy park. The power station was decomissioned in 1996. Demolition of the towers will take place once the remaining planning and preparation has been completed.

Kitchener Camp on TV

THE forgotten story of how the people of Sandwich played a key role in saving thousands of men from certain death at the hands of the Nazis in the Holocaust is to be featured in a BBC TV show on Monday. Between February and September 1939 Jews came to Britain and were given safe haven at an old and rundown World War One training base – The Kitchener Camp. Inside Out is on BBC One at 7.30pm on Monday, January 23.

SeaFrance refund vow

DEFUNCT Dover-to-Calais ferry operator SeaFrance says any customers owed money will get refunds for their bookings. It comes after the Commercial Court in Paris ordered the full liquidation of the firm. Rival cross-Channel operators are currently locked in talks to buy up the ferries which operated on the route. Any customers wishing to contact SeaFrance directly can call 0845 458 0666.

HEALTH

NHS Trust's new iPhone app gives teens access to free sexual advice

HEALTH chiefs have developed an iPhone app to help reduce unplanned teenage pregnancy and improve the sexual health of the county's youngsters.

The Kent C Card app helps youngsters access free condoms, emergency contraception and information about getting treated for sexually transmitted infections.

All teenagers aged 19 and under are able to register with the scheme, which follows on from the C Card initiative, a community-based contraceptive scheme set up in 2007, to help young people access free condoms and advice.

Head of sexual health at Kent Community Health NHS Trust Ruth Herron said the C Card scheme had been successful, with more than 45,850 teenagers registering since 2007, and more than 5,000 hits to the website every month.

"It is a major part of the drive to improve sexual health and reduce unplanned teenage pregnancy in the county," she said.

"However, we recognise the need to be able to give teenagers the information they require on the move as well. This app not only gives people information about the C Card, it can also point them immediately in the direction of the nearest outlet to get free condoms or advice about their sexual health."

The app uses active maps to direct teenagers to where they can get contraception and information.

In the past, some of the county's districts have seen high teenage pregnancy rates, but health bosses say there is an overall downward trend across Kent.

The latest countywide figures show that in 2009 there were 968 conceptions in females aged under 18 and 883 in 2010.

An NHS spokeswoman for Kent and Medway said teenage pregnancy increases the likelihood of living in poverty and leads to poor long-term outcomes for young parents and their children.

She added that young mothers are one third less likely to breastfeed and many would struggle to complete their education, therefore finding it difficult to gain employment.

Anyone who wants to register with the scheme must attend an appointment with a trained advisor. For more information about the C Card go to www.foryoungpeople.co.uk.

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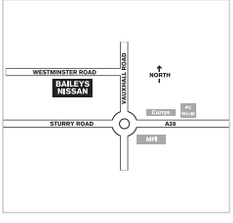

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BORIS ISLAND

Leaders demand crunch estuary airport meeting with transport minister

By Ed Hill
ed.hill@archant.co.uk

POLITICAL leaders in Kent have demanded an urgent meeting with ministers after the Government confirmed a formal consultation into an international airport in the Thames Estuary is to go ahead.

And while many of the county's most senior figures continue to privately maintain the scheme will not take off, concerns are growing that the Government's previous dismissal of the idea is rapidly turning into a love affair.

There have so far been two firm proposals put forward. One, dubbed Boris Island after it was proposed by London Mayor Boris Johnson, would see land in the middle of the estuary – close to both Grain and Sheppey – reclaimed. The other, put forward by architect Lord Foster, urges runways to be built on Grain.

Both have been fiercely criticised by Kent County Council, Medway Council, Swale Borough Council and conservationists who point to mass destruction of the landscape and wildlife.

However, after initially being dismissed as "pie in the sky" the proposals have gathered steam in recent months.

Yet there remain nagging doubts that behind the project is an elaborate ploy to help Mr Johnson's coming re-election efforts in May.

Cllr Rodney Chambers, leader of Medway Council, told this paper: "Boris, at the last mayoral election, told the voters of west London if they voted for him he would oppose a third runway and he'd get a reduction in the use of Heathrow.

"He didn't say how. After being elected he came out with this plan for the estuary so he could go back to his voters to say 'look, I'm doing my best'.

"The interesting thing is that in the Autumn Statement the Chancellor said there would be consideration for a study to be undertaken as part of its aviation strategy review. The only thing he did say was that it must not include a third runway at Heathrow – that's a political statement to help Boris."

And while many in Kent believe the construction of such an amibitious proposal – believed to cost around £50 billion – would bring a vital boost to the local economy, local politicians remain, publicly at least, united in opposition.

Chatham and Aylesford Tory MP, Tracey Crouch said the consultation was a "tedious, unnecessary, expensive waste of taxpayer money", adding: "I am firmly against the proposal."

Now, in an open letter, Medway Council has called for an urgent meeting with the Secretary of State for Transport Justine Greening.

It said: "Medway Council runs a campaign against this pipe dream of an airport scheme along with Kent County Council and the RSPB.

"And all Medway councillors back this campaign against an airport on or near the estuary.

"It would appear to us the Mayor of London's office have been privately briefing the Government on its plan and we think a meeting with yourself at the earliest opportunity would provide a good, and much needed, opportunity to discuss face to face the ramifications of such proposals for Medway, the historic county of Kent and all communities near the Thames estuary.

"We feel it is important to point out that 76 per cent of the UK public say they are against the airport, as are many airline industry leaders.

"If it were to go ahead it would have a huge affect on the lives of hundreds of thousands of residents in Medway, as well as across Kent and the wider Thames estuary, and would devastate an area of global environmental significance providing a home for around 250,000 migrating wildfowl annually.

"An airport would cost up to £70bn, would require huge infrastructure and would cut great swathes off the green belt and countryside."

TAKING OFF: Lord Foster's Grain airport design

It is signed by the leaders of all four main political groups in Medway; Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem and Independent.

Protect Kent, the county's branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, welcomed the chance to highlight the schemes' failings.

Andrew Ogden, campaigns manager, said: "We anticipate that this opportunity to share all of the facts and figures behind these proposals will expose them as the futile schemes they are.

"We will also be calling for a referendum to be held among all residents likely to be impacted."

Charles Buchanan, chief executive of Manston Airport – where many critics of the estuary scheme point to being a better place for development – welcomed the consultation: "It is vital any decision on such a major development is evidence-based and considers all the opportunities and challenges of the solutions proposed."

■ **What are your views? Write to us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk and let us know if you are for or against a new airport.**

NEWS IN BRIEF

MP backs yacht plan

CANTERBURY Tory MP Julian Brazier, Co-Chairman of the All-Party Ports and Maritime Group, has backed a motion calling on the Government to examine options for replacing the Royal Yacht without spending public funds.

The motion says: "This House notes the former Royal Yacht Britannia played a major role in British diplomacy and trade promotion, as well as providing a suitable transport for her Majesty on visits to Commonwealth and foreign nations."

Mum abandoned child

A MOTHER who left her six-year-old child home alone for five days has been sent to jail.

Natalie Terry, 28, (pictured) left the youngster in "appalling conditions", with animal faeces on the floor of the home.

The child eventually sought refuge from a neighbour after being cold and hungry.

When police visited the home, they found that the child had been left for almost five days.

Terry, of Willow Road, Dartford, was sentenced to 18 months in prison after admitting child neglect, at Maidstone Crown Court.

The child is now eight years old. Terry also admitted failing to surrender to police.

Det Con Fleur Hardie said: "Children deserve to grow up in a loving environment where they are protected from harm, not subjected to it. I am pleased with this sentence, which shows we will do everything in our power to bring such offenders to justice."

KOS CAMPAIGN

Children's charities benefit from newspaper's festive campaign

A CHARITY that cares for terminally ill children has thanked Archant KOS Media after benefiting from our Kent Kids for Christmas campaign.

Demelza Hospice Care for Children received a cheque for £3,272 from the appeal, which is run by this newspaper, to help good causes that benefit young people in Kent.

Spokeswoman for the Sittingbourne-based charity Helen Francis said the donation would help pay for trips and activities for teenagers who use the service.

"Demelza relies on organisations like Archant Kos Media to help us bring in the much-needed funds year in, year out, as well as raise awareness of what we do," she said.

"We also really appreciate the support the newspaper gives us in terms of publicity. Thanks again to everyone who was involved in this generous donation. It really will make a difference to the children and families who use Demelza."

A cheque for £3,272 was also donated to Dave Lee's Happy Holidays, a week before the panto legend lost his battle with pancreatic cancer.

His Herne Bay-based charity raises money to send sick and underprivileged children on trips and holidays of a lifetime.

Fundraiser Phil Hadler said the volunteers would carry on the work of Dave Lee and continue to help Kent children enjoy holidays and panto trips.

Both charities will also benefit from a further £702 each courtesy of the Archant Gold Scheme, which sees funds raised through charitable events matched by the company.

Money raised for the Kent Kids for Christmas appeal at a race night at Buckmore Park near Chatham last year was doubled through the programme.

Managing director of Archant KOS Media Paul Stannard said he was delighted to help such good causes.

"Kids are the future of Kent and we want to raise it for the future of our county," he said.

He also paid tribute to his friend of 20 years Dave Lee.

"He was so good to the children in Kent. When you donated money to his charity, you felt like you were giving it to his own kids," he said.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Thief targets schools

A crook who breaks into school changing rooms while pupils are playing sport is being hunted by police.

Officers and investigating a number of thefts – with schools in Tonbridge and Hildenborough being targeted. Police say they believe the crimes could be linked – but at this stage are not revealing the names of the schools involved.

Items taken include an Omega watch, mobile phones, and an iPod Touch.

Caretaker is 80 and out

SEVENOAKS Community Centre caretakers, Rita and Jim Lepper are to be given a grand retirement send off by the town mayor, councillors, and colleagues – now that Jim has reached 80.

Jim started working as caretaker at Sevenoaks Community Centre in March, 1996. Rita joined Jim at a later date and "together they make an invaluable team who will be greatly missed in retirement", say officials.

Grammar plan attack

MOVES that could see Sevenoaks get a grammar school have been attacked by Labour's shadow education secretary Stephen Twigg. He said: "The Tory-led Government is expanding selection at 11 by the back door, by trying to sneak through changes to the admission code without parliamentary debate. David Cameron promised no return to the 11-plus and no return to a grammar school system."

KNIFE CRIME

International appeal of tragic Harry Potter actor's film festival

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

AN annual film festival held in memory of the murdered teenage Harry Potter star Rob Knox is gearing up for its biggest ever year.

The 18-year-old was killed in May, 2008, in Sidcup, just after he'd finished filming his role as Marcus Belby in Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince.

He had signed on to be in Deathly Hallows.

Rob died after being stabbed outside a bar when he intervened in a fight to protect his brother Jamie, 17 at the time, from two men, one of whom was armed with a pair of knives.

After his death the Rob Knox Foundation was created to campaign against knife and gun crime and promote citizenship, and all the funds from the film festival will go to the fund.

Organisers are expecting a record number of free entries to the Rob Knox Film Festival 2012 as it continues to grow in reputation since its launch in 2009.

Set up by festival director Michael Wearing, from Middle Stoke on the Hoo Peninsula, it aims to raise the profile of positive behaviour by young people; provide an opportunity for locally made films to reach a wider audience; give an opportunity for young people to see independent films from around the world; offer learning opportunities for young filmmakers; and identify films that tackle social issues or that could be used in an educational context.

There are eight award categories this year: best film; best director; best screenplay; best actor; best actress; best film under five minutes; best community film tackling a social issue; and best 99 per cent film which raises the profile of positive activity by young people.

Last year Edilberto Restino cut short filming in Brazil to collect his award for best director. Previous award winners have attended from USA, Greece and Belgium.

Mr Wearing said: "It is a local festival aimed at local people especially the young, but we have gained an international reputation.

"We know filmmakers at all stages of their careers and those just doing it for fun have a desire for their films to be seen by others, and we try to make that happen for as many as we can."

Filmmakers wishing to have their efforts considered for screening at the festival should email robknoxff@btinternet.com for an entry form.

STAB VICTIM: Rob Knox played Marcus Belby

The festival opens on May 29 at New Generation Church, Sidcup, and ends with the awards night at Cineworld Bexleyheath on June 6.

Rob had been an actor from the age of 11, with some appearances as an extra before bagging a small part in The Bill. He also appeared in the Channel 4 reality show Trust me I'm a Teenager, and the BBC comedy After You've Gone. His first film was King Arthur in 2004.

Karl Bishop, 25, from Lewisham, was found guilty of murder in February, 2009, and jailed for life with a minimum of 20 years. Police said he showed no remorse.

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ANIMALS

Cat charity near 'crisis' point as recession sees rise in jilted pets

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

TUNBRIDGE Wells cats are in crisis. So many residents are 'feline' the financial pinch and giving their pets up for adoption that cat rescue centres are being over run.

Now the Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough and District branch of Cats Protection has issued an emergency appeal in response to a dramatic rise in the number of unwanted cats needing the charity's help.

There is usually a pick up in pets being handed in after Christmas, but staff said this year they have been overwhelmed.

As a result, the charity – which normally looks after around 6,000 cats nationally at any one time – has issued an emergency appeal asking people to consider adopting a cat to stop the situation getting any worse.

The group, which was founded in 1927 as the Cats Protection League and later changed its named in 1998, said new owners are failing to come forward in their usual numbers, as money for feed and cats becomes ever more stretched.

Tunbridge Wells homing officer Miriam Bennett said: "This surge in unwanted cats is extremely distressing. It is a crisis for the cats and it piles additional pressure onto our volunteers. The branch is already stretched to the limit looking after the cats in its care.

"We are currently inundated with cats because of the recession; people are having to leave their homes and are often unable to take their cats with them.

"We are struggling to find space for them in our foster homes. I fear this could push the branch to breaking point if it continues and leave us unable to help many more unwanted cats so we are urgently asking for help," said Miriam.

"If people are unable to adopt a cat or kitten then a donation of just £16 could enable us to care for one extra cat – providing them with food, veterinary care and a warm place to sleep."

If you would like to adopt a cat or make a donation, please call Miriam at Cats Protection's Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough and District branch on 01892 516377 or go to the website www.cats.org.uk.

■ **Read all the very latest news and sport at www.yourtunbridgewells.co.uk.**

FELINE BAD: (From left to right) Simba, Pumba and Angel are all looking for a new homes after being given up by their owners

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Jail for Xmas tree thief

A GRINCH who stole more than 100 Christmas trees from Notcutt Garden Centre in Pembury has been jailed for 18 months.

Grant Hodgson, 31, of Court Road, Burham, was caught in the act with two accomplices who were handed community orders. Hodgson was out on licence for other offences at the time.

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COLLEAGUES: Actor Stephen Mulhern (left) starred alongside Dave in many pantomimes

STAR'S DEATH

Son pays tribute to popular, funny and generous Dave Lee

By Marijke Cox
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THAT familiar smile and quick wit the people of Kent knew and loved so well stayed with panto legend Dave Lee right until the very end.

In true Dave Lee-style, when asked how he was feeling, the popular comic whipped the oxygen mask off his face and replied: "I'm ready for the Olympics."

Sadly, the 64-year-old passed away just hours later, losing his battle with pancreatic cancer and leaving behind three children, six grandchildren, and casting a shadow over the county which loved him.

His eldest son Darren Legge, 44, a chef at the Red Lion pub in Stodmarsh, said the family had been overwhelmed with support.

"It's been an upsetting time for us, but we've had so many phone calls from people here and from further afield – I didn't realise just how popular he was," he said.

"He was a wonderful father, he made people laugh and he did so much to help others."

Dave, who lived for many years in Herne before moving to Canterbury, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in October, forcing him to pull out of the pantomime Cinderella at the Marlowe in Canterbury, where he had performed more than 1,000 times over 16 years.

He died on Monday, with his family by his side.

Mr Legge said: "The last couple of weeks had been a bit harder for him and on Sunday he was struggling for breath with a chest infection.

"He looked well until the end and smiled right through. He was sat there with his oxygen mask speaking to us.

"He was a Tottenham fan and was asking lots of questions. He was playing around and asking how they did.

"When he was asked by the doctor how he felt he took his mask off and said he was ready for the Olympics."

His father's funeral is being held at Canterbury Cathedral at 2pm on Monday, January 30, followed by a private family service at Barham crematorium, where Dave's late wife Linda was cremated four years ago.

Only two weeks ago it was announced Dave would receive the major honour of becoming a Freeman of the City from Canterbury City Council for his tireless fundraising work and entertainment.

Chief executive Colin Carmichael said the ceremony at the Guildhall on Tuesday, January 31, would still go ahead and the comic would be made a Freeman posthumously.

"We know how pleased and excited Dave was about the award and look forward to welcoming his family and many, many friends to the Guildhall to what we hope will be a celebration of his life and achievements," he said.

Suggestions have also been put forward for a permanent tribute to Dave outside The Marlowe in the form of a bench.

'The Bench' was a regular set-piece performed at the Marlowe pantomime which became eagerly anticipated by the audience.

Mr Legge said: "It would be nice for the tribute to have something to do with the theatre. I think it's a good idea to have The Bench."

Dave, who had three children, Darren, Justin, 40, and Debbie, 42, started his career

Charity's volunteers vow to continue Happy Holidays legacy left by comic

DAVE Lee was best known for his legendary pantomime performances – but the funnyman did more than entertain the masses.

In addition to his showbiz career, the star worked tirelessly for charity, launching his own organisation 15 years ago with wife Linda to raise funds to send sick and underprivileged children on holiday.

Dave Lee's Happy Holidays reached the £2 million mark just over a year ago.

Speaking to Archant KOS Media at the time of the milestone, he said he was absolutely thrilled.

"Every penny of the money raised gets spent sending children and their families on holiday – no-one in the charity gets paid," he said.

"It's not only the children that need a holiday, but the families, too. It's natural for the rest of the family to be put on the back-burner when there is a sick child.

"Or in other cases the family can't afford to go away on holiday. This gives them a chance to go somewhere they have never been before."

Since its launch, the charity has sent thousands of children on holiday to places including Camber Sands – where the organisation has five holiday homes – Tenerife, Lapland and Florida.

Every Christmas, youngsters are taken to the pantomime at the Marlowe in Canterbury.

Happy Holidays' corporate fundraiser and close friend of Dave, Phil Hadler, said the volunteers intended to carry on the comic's hard work.

"We're all feeling down in the dumps; it's hard to imagine running the charity without Dave, he was the figurehead," he said.

"He was always at the front, helping out if a Camber caravan needed sorting out or anything else that had to be done, and he was there for the events. He could never believe how generous people were and was amazed with what people did to help."

Mr Hadler said, however, that Dave was never the same since his wife Linda died four years ago.

But the star, who was also patron of the East Kent Animal Centre, pushed on with fundraising events including his annual charity golf day at Chart Hills Golf Club, near Ashford, with celebrity pals in tow.

Spurs boss Harry Redknapp, Gillingham manager Andy Hessenthaler, and former England footballer Luther Blissett are among the sporting stars to attend over the years.

Dave's friends Jim Davidson, Bobby Davro and Bradley Walsh were also regulars at the event.

His tireless charity work saw him receive an MBE in 2003.

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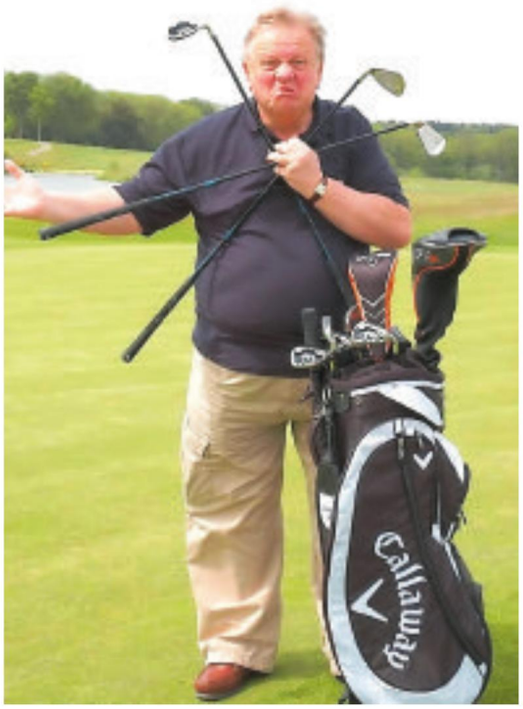

FOND MEMORIES: Funnyman Dave Lee (left) is missed by star Jim Davidson and Gillingham FC manager Andy Hessenthaler

Stars, sportsmen and politicians honour loss of 'a true gentleman'

TRIBUTES poured in this week as the county woke to the sad news that much-loved comic and panto star Dave Lee had died.

If there was any doubt about how much he was loved then the outpourings proved just how much the funnyman meant to the people of Kent.

Marlowe pantomime producer Paul Hendy described him as "Kent's best mate".

"We always billed him as a 'legend' and as far as the local community was concerned, this was true," he said.

Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre director Mark Everett called it a sad day for the theatre, where Dave had performed more than 1,000 times over 16 years.

He said: "Dave never had a bad word to say about anybody – he was absolutely wonderful."

His celebrity pals also paid tribute to the star.

Friend Jim Davidson said it had been a terrible shock to everyone.

"Dave was a great comedian and a great bloke. Everybody liked him. He had something that all comedians strive for – likeability. He was a great mate to all of us, but now he is with the love of his life Linda and on the January 31 he will receive the Freedom of Heaven instead."

Comic Bradley Walsh paid tribute to his friend on Twitter: "He brought smiles to so many faces as a drummer and singer and had several records released. He went on to form his own comedy show band, acting as both lead singer and impressionist.

But it was a chance meeting with Eric Morecambe that changed his life forever.

Eric had watched Dave performing with his group and advised him to start a solo career as a comedian or actor in his own right.

He began his TV career as a warm up man for Michael Parkinson, Michael Aspel and Jimmy Tarbuck.

Dave then appeared in front of the cameras on shows like Des O'Connor Tonight, the Generation Game, A Royal Gala for HRH Prince Charles, The Brian Conley Show and Big Break and recently hosting his own golf series Through The Green. He was also nominated in the British Comedy Awards.

He was also a regular on radio and over the past 25 years he worked in pantomime, mostly appearing at the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury.

He received an MBE for his work for charity, raising more than £2 million through Dave Lee's Happy Holidays.

"He was a wonderful father, he made people laugh and he did so much to help others"

DARREN LEGGE, DAVE LEE'S SON

both as the comedian and through his charity."

Kent wicketkeeper Geraint Jones said: "A statue of him outside the Marlowe is deserved after his years in panto and for his charity work."

As well as his time on stage, the entertainer also spent many years as a non-executive director for Gillingham FC.

Manager Andy Hessenthaler, who had worked alongside Dave doing charity work for the past 10 years, called him a "true gentleman".

"He thought about everybody else rather than himself. He was a larger than life character and had a heart of gold," he said.

Dave was also a commentator for all-star cricket club Lashings in Maidstone. Scott Charlton, who was Dave's co-commentator at Lashings games, said he was "heartbroken" by the news.

The popular entertainer was a friend of Archant KOS Media managing director Paul Stannard who had known him for nearly 20 years,

"What he did for kids and their families within Kent should never be forgotten," he said.

Politicians were also among the many to express sadness at his death.

MP for North Thanet Sir Roger Gale said: "Dave Lee was one of those rare people who spread light and laughter to all around them."

ROBBERY

Diamond rings taken in smash-and-grab raid

POLICE are hunting two men on a motorbike suspected of a smash and grab from a jewellers in Deal High Street,

The men smashed the window of the store with a hammer and grabbed a handful of diamond rings before escaping. Police are appealing for witnesses to the incident which happened on Wednesday at 4.51pm. Call 101 quoting reference KP-20120118-0954.

PHONE HACKING

Russell given payout by News of the World

THE father of hammer attack survivor Josie Russell has been given a payout over phone hacking by the News of the World.

Shaun Russell, whose wife Lin and daughter Megan were killed in the attack by Michael Stone in Chillenden in 1996, was given an undisclosed sum after he sued News International along with dozens of other phone-hacking victims including Jude Law and Lord Prescott.

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MUSIC

Rockers' debt to Dartford

By Nick Ames
nick.ames@archant.co.uk

A TV show has detailed a little known but vital Kent contribution to the UK's music boom of the 1960s and 70s – which helped to define the sound of rock.

The Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Shadows, the Dave Clark Five and the Yardbirds all had one thing in common during the 1960s – they shared their stage with Vox amplifiers.

The programme Vox Pop: How Dartford Powered the British Beat Boom tells the story of how in the 1950s the owner of a small music company in Dartford – which specialised in importing accordions – realised there was a rising interest in new-fangled electric guitars.

Some of the nation's top musicians, including Brian May of Queen, Bruce Welch of the Shadows, Justin Haywood of the Moody Blues, and Status Quo's Francis Rossi, and Vox workers of the time, explain how the small company made such a big impact.

"The sound had to be good and the sound was good", said singer Marty Wilde.

Also featured are contemporary bands including The Horrors explaining how the Vox sound influences their music.

As there was a post-war trade embargo on American amplifiers such as Fender and Gibson, Vox made great sounding British amps to fill the gap in the market.

Picture: KEV MEREDITH

GIVING VOICE: Vox amplifiers helped to create the sounds of some of the greatst bands of the 1960s, and were used by Status Quo's Francis Rossi

The show demonstrates the "clean and classy sound" of the Vox as opposed to the Fender, described as "the sound of America in the 60s", and the Marshall, "more power, more distortion".

New up-coming band The Beatles loved the equipment and Vox became part of their sound and their stylish on-stage image, while The Rolling Stones – who also came from Dartford – loved their innovative guitars as well as the amps.

Reg Clark was sales manager of the company's London store when the manager of a band came in and said he needed equipment – for free.

He told the BBC: "He said the band is called The Beatles and they've been playing the Star Club in Hamburg."

Suddenly, because of the publicity surrounding the Liverpool band, everyone wanted Vox equipment and the company hit the big time, made a fortune, and then lost it all by 1967.

Vince Rogers, the show's producer said: "The programme was such a joy to work on because everyone involved seemed to have a genuine affection for Vox products. The musicians seem to love the eccentricities of the lo-tech valve driven amplifiers.

"And you could feel the enthusiasm of the ex-employees who used to work in the factories in Dartford.

"When they gathered together for the filming of interviews, they stayed for hours chatting about the good old days."

■ **The programme airs on BBC Four on Friday, January 27, at 10pm.**

Picture: THOMAS STEFFAN

RHAPSODY: Queen's Brian May was also a fan of the Dartford-made sound equipment

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IMMIGRATION

Talk breaks the silence over centuries-old African heritage

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE arrival of black people in Kent goes back centuries, and an expert on the period will be giving an illustrated talk on some of the county's first immigrants.

Prof David Killingray from Sevenoaks, is giving the talk later this month in Tunbridge Wells.

He said: "I will be talking about black people, that is people of African origin and descent, in Kent from about 1600 onwards.

"Most people think Britain only had a black population after the Second World War, particularly after 1948.

"Kent being a maritime county and close to the metropolis, had a number of black people in places like Gravesend and the Medway Towns and the coastal towns.There were all kinds of people; students, doctors, dentists, preachers and labourers, of all ages and sexes.

"We should be interested in this time because it is part of British history and people don't know about it. If you pick up the average history book, you will find very little if anything about black people in Britain.

"You won't find very much about immigrants in Britain, actually. Scratch under the surface for most of us and we will find we are of an immigrant population from one place or another and we make up a sizeable part of the British population."

The talk will be at the Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery, and is part of a series of illustrated talks.

The professor said the presentation introduces a true hidden history from more than 400 years ago.

African sailors and travellers were a common sight at coastal and riverside ports from the late 1500s.

And the number of black people coming to the county increased during the 1700s as Britain became dominant in the transatlantic trading system, including the African slave trade.

Black servants lived in Kentish homes, but among visitors was Olaudah Equiano, the former slave whose autobiography was published in 1789.

In the 1800s local sources provide accounts of African preachers, missionaries, students, doctors, as well as artisans and vagabonds, and entertainers such as the great actor Ira Aldridge.

Prof Killingray is well placed as an expert on the subject. He is emeritus professor at Goldsmiths, and a senior research fellow in the School of Advanced Study, University of London; and also honorary professor of history, University of Stellenbosch.

He has written a number of books and many articles on aspects of African, Caribbean, Imperial, and English history.

He said: "Black people are part of our glorious cosmopolitan nature of Britain. Kent's ports sent ships to get slaves from the west coast of Africa, but they also brought them back as sailors – you were likely to lose some of your crew so you would pick up some local people.

"Black people were also sent here by Christian missions to be educated and some of them went to St Augustine's in Canterbury, so we had a succession of young men being trained in the Christian ministry. They also learned how to play cricket there. This was happening in the 1860s and up to the 1930s."

The talk is at the Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery Camden Centre on Wednesday, January 25, at 7.45pm, with tickets costing £5 from the museum or by calling 01892 554171.

■ **More news and sport at www.yourtunbridgewells.co.uk.**

IMMIGRANTS: From the top, Olaudah Equiano and Ira Aldridge are two better known black people to have played a part in Kent history

CHARACTER: William Cuffey, a black Chartist, born in Chatham 1788, was active in the demands for democracy in the 1840s. For his pains he was convicted and transported to Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) in 1849. He died in 1870.

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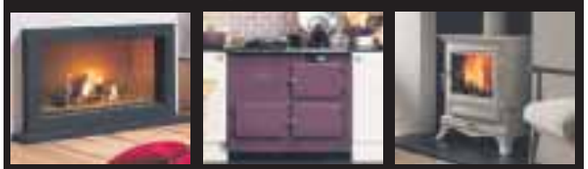
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WIN! The chance to cross the Olympic finishing line

ON YOUR MARKS: Lord Coe, Danny Crates, Tamzin Outhwaite and Roger Black are all ready for The National Lottery Olympic Park Run at the end of March

OUR readers are today being given the unique opportunity to run within the Olympic Park and cross the stadium finish line before any of our Olympians even begin their warm-up.

The ballot for one of the 5,000 places to take part in The National Lottery Olympic Park Run on March 31, closed at the end of October.

But we have managed to secure a place to give away to one Archant KOS Media reader for what will be the very first public event to be staged in the magnificent Olympic Stadium.

The five-mile course will cross the Olympic Park and offer access to the area on a scale not yet experienced by the public.

The route will pass alongside the other iconic Olympic and Paralympic Games venues that The National Lottery has helped to fund and where many elite athletes' hopes and dreams of London 2012 medal success will be realised just a few months later.

The run will then finish on the home straight in the spectacular Olympic Stadium.

The National Lottery OLYMPIC PARK RUN

Hoping to cross the finish line first will also be a host of former and current Olympic and Paralympic athletes and celebrity runners.

Everyone taking part will receive a computer chip timing for a completely accurate running time, a souvenir finisher's medal, on-course refreshments, branded t-shirt to run in and a finisher's pack.

All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning the place is visit www.kentnews.co.uk with the correct answer to the following question:

How many miles is The National Lottery Olympic Park Run?

This historic five-mile run, which celebrates the contribution of The National Lottery and its players to London 2012 is open to anyone aged 16 or over, of any running ability (certain exclusions apply).

And not only that, each runner will also get two spectator tickets for family or friends to take their seat in the Olympic Stadium itself and cheer them on.

The National Lottery is contributing up to £2.2 billion towards the funding of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, including the venues and infrastructure where Britain's athletes hope to fulfil their dreams.

■ **For full details and all the terms and conditions and how to enter, see www.kentnews.co.uk.**

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EXPLORER

Antarctica trek an 'overwhelmingly awesome' challenge for lone woman explorer on skis

By Marijke Cox
editorial@archant.co.uk

IT'S ONLY been two years since Felicity Aston's celebrated all-female trek in Antarctica – but the intrepid explorer is back out on the ice already.

This time, however, the 33-year-old adventurer is going it alone and taking on a challenge which could see her become the first woman in history to make a solo crossing of Antarctica.

Miss Aston, from Birchington, admitted before she left in November that no amount of experience or training could prepare her for the mental strain of being so isolated.

So, one month into her trip, this newspaper spoke to her via satellite phone.

From her tent in Antarctica, Miss Aston told Archant KOS Media how difficult, but inspiring, the trip had been so far.

"When the plane first dropped me off it was a real shock. It doesn't matter how much preparation I'd done, it was surprising how immensely tough it was to be that much on my own," she said.

"For the first 18 days every day was a struggle. Back then the thought of being where I am now was inconceivable – 32 days down I'm by the Thiel mountains with the sun shining down and I'm two thirds of the way through.

"The mental state of being on my own has been hard. In the first leg I was up a glacier, the altitude affected me quite badly, I had a really bad cough and was struggling for breath. I would start moving and then moments later I would have to stop and cough. I was feeling sick, it affected my attitude.

"Every morning I would wake up and think: 'I really don't want to be here – what was I thinking?' These demons would say to me: 'It's too far, there's too much exposure'.

"I was very vulnerable. Every day I had to get over that and tell myself I had to ski and get on with it.

"I have to be very careful about what I let myself think about. Becoming an emotional wreck doesn't help me.

"If I start thinking about family and home I start crying and my goggles steam up and I get a layer of ice so I can't see.

"That's not a good thing when you're skiing."

Miss Aston said a high point of her trip was reaching the South Pole.

"This was where I saw people. I arrived in the worst weather. I couldn't see – I kept thinking 'I mustn't miss it'. They knew I was coming and they waited for me. It was lovely to have people there. I was worried about leaving though.

"But this leg of the journey I must have got used to being on my own. It's also been warmer with less altitude.

"I have these strange moments of feeling absolutely euphoric. The other day I got out of the tent and it made me want to cry. Being out in Antarctica, it's overwhelmingly awesome.

"I have these moments of great joy – it's really bizarre. This leg of the journey I've been feeling absolutely invincible."

Miss Aston, who is journeying more than 1,000 miles, said she had escaped serious injury but had suffered chilblains on her cheeks, cracked sore skin on her fingers and painful ears, where her headphones, when listening to music, had rubbed at her cold skin.

"There are things I'm looking forward to when I get back; I'm fantasising about washing my hair," she said.

"I've been going on expeditions for 10 years and I find it helps me not to take things for granted at home. But I also know how lucky I am to be doing what I'm doing out here."

ADVENTURE: Felicity Aston is crossing Antarctica by herself

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News

HERITAGE

Trust's plea for help to save historic home

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

HISTORIC GEM: Knole in Sevenoaks is in urgent need of repair

ONE of Kent's most important buildings is crumbling and needs urgent renovation work.

Some £2.7 million needs spending on Knole, near Sevenoaks, so an appeal for funds has been launched.

It is in dire need of emergency external repairs. Modern cement render on the east front of the building has cracked, letting water into the state rooms on view to the public. The roof also needs repair, along with a host of broken stonework.

Work will start in April and is likely to take about two years to complete. But money is needed now to get the ball rolling, said the National Trust.

This is in preparation for the proposed Inspired by Knole project to raise awareness, due in 2014, but which is dependent on the success of a £7.5m Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

The appeal will go to 250,000 National Trust supporters with a connection to Knole, and asks them to help save one of the Trust's most precious and fragile buildings.

It was originally built to be a palace for the Archbishops of Canterbury in the 15th century. Then it was annexed as a Tudor residence and finally remodelled by the Sackville family during the 17th centurye.

The building holds important collections of upholstered furniture and tapestries from the royal palaces, but the elements are taking their toll, and officials want to fight back.

The emergency exterior works are the first phase in a programme that aims to insulate, heat, rewire and install lighting and control systems.

The collections will then be returned to rooms with stable conservation conditions.

Marketing manager Jane Maltby said: "Knole is one of the most important houses in the country, but the problem is people don't know it yet.

"Our wider plans are to open more rooms and let people see what a fantastic place this is. Before we can do that, we have to do these repairs."

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News

HEALTH

Olympic hopeful's best foot foward for health campaign

By Marijke Cox
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

A RISING race walking star has become the latest Olympic hopeful to throw his weight behind a new health campaign.

Tom Bosworth, from Sevenoaks, gave his backing to the Healthy Passport Club, which has been rolled out by NHS West Kent – one of 17 pilot sites across England chosen by the Government to develop a local Change4Life scheme.

It looks to encourage positive lifestyle changes in families and promotes healthy eating and living.

Tom, 22, who is part of Team GB and a member of Tonbridge Athletics Club, said the scheme was a brilliant idea.

"I am delighted to be one of the Health Heroes supporting the passport club which helps make exercising fun and rewarding for everyone," he said.

The Healthy Passport Club's 'Taking Steps Challenge' is well underway, which encourages all members to take up the challenge of doing 150 active minutes a week.

Tom, who holds the 5km outdoor British walk record with an impressive 19 minutes and 29 seconds, is in training for the 20km race walking event in London 2012.

While his fast speeds won't be for everyone, he urged people to get involved in the activity.

"There are all kinds of walking, from gentle family strolls, to a brisk walk with your dog, or perhaps Nordic walking, to the more competitive sport of race walking that I do," he said.

"Find the one that suits you best and the Healthy Passport Club will help you to set goals, track your steps and reward you on the way."

GB Olympic hockey hopeful Ashley Jackson is also backing the campaign.

Celebrity supporters of the Healthy Passport Club include BBC One's Strictly Come Dancing star Anton Du Beke and presenter Gloria Hunniford, who both live in Sevenoaks. Health Heroes partners include the Ramblers' Association, Maidstone Leisure Centre, and Explore Kent.

The Healthy Passport Club is open to everyone, of any age or ability, and offers support including healthy recipe ideas, suggestions of local activities, newsletters, prize draws, members' stories and top tips to keep you on track. The club already boasts a massive 14,000 members.

All six borough councils in west Kent are providing free healthy walks and people can find a walk close to them at https://www.healthyclub.nhs.uk/pages/activities-search/.

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WILDLIFE

University joins the battle to halt the trade in endangered species

By Rob Colman
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

SCIENTISTS at the University of Kent have been working on new ways to crack down on the illegal international trade in endangered species.

Many may think of endangered species living in faraway lands, but Kent holds the largest UK population of orchids – they flourish in the county and are subject to illegal trade.

Two projects are being led by the university's Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, one of which has partners in the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar.

The Durrell Institute is working with with Madagasikara Voakajy, a conservation group working to protect native Madagascar species and their habitats. But the island's government, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Conservation International, and the Department of Animal Biology at the University of Antananarivo, are also all involved.

Researchers are working to support the sustainable and legal trade of some chameleons, and are also working to conserve and protect the most threatened chameleon species from extinction.

This involves working with communities, government and protected area management to reduce destruction of key chameleon habitats and the illegal collection for the pet trade.

This part of the project focuses on the application of scientific information to evaluate whether individual chameleon species can be collected from the wild without harming the overall population.

Professor Richard Griffiths from the Durrell Institute said: "Madagascar is a hotspot for illegal trade, as it's a very poor country with little money.

"There are 74 species of chameleon, which are now being targeted for the pet trade. These chameleons are not easy to keep, they go for high prices and are aimed at specialist collectors, fetching in excess of £300 each.

"We are working with partners in Madagascar to monitor the species listed and make sure the trade is watched and will not be detrimental to the chameleon population."

The Durrell Institute is also working on projects to rid the flourishing illegal online trade of rare species which is threatening the survival of much endangered UK species, including orchids that bloom in Kent.

The county is home to some of Britain's rarest orchids, like the early spider orchid, which grows at Samphire Hoe, near Dover.

Work is being done to develop technology that will sift through millions of items for sale on the internet, and spot those that could be criminal.

Dr Dave Roberts said: "We are not trying to ban online trading or anything like that, the internet itself isn't the threat, but it's another tool to market products and species.

"It's more that we are working with police to target illegal activity, as it's a worldwide problem to identify items for sale.

"I have a special interest in the illegal trade of orchids, from live plants in trade, to pressed plants, which is something the Victorians did.

"Kent has such a diversity of orchid species, in fact Kent is the orchid capital of the UK, so it is important to monitor this rare and beautiful group of plants."

Picture: VELELA

THREATENED: The scientists' efforts will go towards protecting foreign species, such as the chameleon (left), as well as those much closer to home, including the early spider orchid here in Kent

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KENT **REMEMBERED**

WONDERFUL SIGHT: A Pacific Class locomotive pulls the boat train from London to the Kent coast

Right on track during railway's golden age

By Nick Ames
nick.ames@archant.co.uk

THE STORY of some of the magnificent steam locomotives constructed at the Ashford Railways Works, and the engines which pulled the boat trains from London to Folkestone and Dover, are the subject of a new book.

The Original Bulleid Pacifics, edited by John Scott-Morgan, is part of publisher Haynes Great Locomotives Series and features two trains which proudly bore a Kentish name throughout the 1950s and early 60s.

The railway engines were the brainchild of design engineer Oliver Bulleid and were first constructed during World War Two when they proved vital in transporting supplies and personnel across the whole of the Southern Railway network, which included Kent.

They were a familiar site pulling trucks containing military hardware to the docks at Chatham and defences on the Isle of Sheppey during the conflict with Hitler's Germany.

Later the locomotives were modified and updated and trains such as the Golden Arrow thundered across the Kent countryside heading for the Channel ports.

Ashford was one of the UK's most important centres for the construction of rolling stock.

It first opened for business in 1847, on a 185-acre site to the south east of the main town, and by 1850 more than 130 new homes had been built for workers at the plant.

STEAM DRIVEN: Kentish Belle

Run by what was then South Eastern Railway the new suburb was given the official name Alfred Town – but everyone else called it Newtown, the name by which the area is still known.

On January 21, 1899, the company merged with the London, Chatham and Dover Railway and Ashford's works expanded, as they did 22 years later when both the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway and the London and South Western Railway were also bought into the fold.

During World War Two, Ashford, along with plants at Brighton and Eastleigh, was vital for war work and the town was a frequent target of raids by the Luftwaffe, which resulted in the deaths of 83 civilians.

After the war locomotives continued to be hugely important in Britain's continuing slow economic upturn and the Golden Arrow services were reintroduced.

Initial timing runs from London Victoria to what was then called Dover Maritime Station started in April, 1946.

Initially pulled by Oliver Bulleid's Merchant Navy Class locomotives before the more efficient Pacifics took over, the trains were a valuable morale booster and reminder of more affluent times as they travlled across the Kentish landscape.

Two notable trains also came into operation in the early 1950s and were both pulled by Bulleid-designed Battle of Britain Class locomotives, which bore the names of RAF squadrons and airfields.

The Kentish Belle ran from Victoria to Margate via Ramsgate, with coaches detaching at Faversham bound for Canterbury, and The Man of Kent which ran via Ashford, Folkestone, Dover and Deal to Thanet stations.

Another of the same class, appropriately named Winston Churchill, headed one of the most famous trains has which ever travelled on Britain's lines – the funeral train of the wartime leader.

The electrification of the network spelt the end of the steam powered locos. But some still remain in operation on heritage lines including the Battle of Britain Class Manston.

This was withdrawn from service by British Railways in 1964, and purchased by a preservation group.

It was first displayed at Richborough Power Station before further restoration work took place in a specialist workshop on a farm near Sellindge.

In September, 2008, it was put into service on the Swanage Line in Dorset – where it still pulls vintage carriages from historic Corfe Castle to the coast.

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OPINION

It pays to study all options

Going to university need not be as expensive as prospective students fear as **Matt Bannister**, careers adviser at MidKent College, explains.

RECESSION, austerity, unemployment – three words that have no doubt come to define the last few years and probably many more to come.

Combined with the headline-grabbing news about increased tuition fees, young people will be forgiven for thinking there's simply no way they can afford a university education.

But while the higher costs may well be a cause of great concern to many families, prospective students owe it to themselves to explore all available options before deciding they can't afford the next step up the educational ladder.

While UCAS will not release its final figures until the end of this month, the data for November showed a 12.9 per cent year-on-year fall in applications from young people wanting to start university this year, and a 6.4 per cent reduction in December.

While the increased tuition fees must be partly to blame, there's a worry many young people won't have researched their options due to all the doom-and-gloom headlines.

One of the many attractions of university is that it's away from home, presenting the opportunity for greater independence. But if a student is willing to sacrifice that aspect, there's always the option to attend a university closer to home.

This removes or drastically reduces the cost of rent for many people, and also reduces the temptation to spend more money on 'entertainment'.

It also shouldn't be forgotten that for students who come from less well-off backgrounds, there are a number of ways they can access additional support, wherever they decide to study.

For example, many universities offer bursaries and non-repayable loans, which can be dependant on pre-agreed performance or other elements such as sporting endeavour or demographic criteria (e.g. coming from a military family or being the first member of the family to access higher education).

In addition, some schemes operated independently or administered by local government have been set up by philanthropists past and present to enable students from certain localities to go to university.

Information on these opportunities is available through portals such as www.turn2us.org.uk.

Meanwhile, universities setting the highest tuition fees must also prove to the Government they are doing more to enable young people from low-income families to attend, and to widen participation from under-represented groups.

The bottom line is that prospective students should not automatically assume they cannot go to university before they research the true cost and assistance available to them.

There is always the option to attend university closer to home

But even those who still decide university is not for them should not be put off moving into higher education.

Institutions like MidKent College offer a wide range of HE courses – including Higher National Diplomas (HND) and foundation degrees – to ensure students have access to the qualifications that are right for them. There are also plans to offer an HND in sports management and a new Level Six programme – equivalent to a degree – in business management and enterprise.

Tuition fees for full-time HE courses for the 2012-13 academic year – all of which are validated by either the University of Kent or Canterbury Christ Church University – are £5,700.

KOS COMMENT

Dave's memory will always raise a smile

DAVE Lee was one of life's good guys, helping everyone else before himself while making them laugh at the same time.

News of his death sparked an outpouring of grief that he probably never would have expected, proving the impact he had on the lives of the people of Kent.

His smile was infectious and his desire to help others less fortunate than himself, admirable. And it was the joy he brought every year in the Marlowe pantomime that many will best remember him for.

Kent may be a slightly duller place without Dave Lee, but he was so full of laughter and kindness his memory will always shine on.

Time to fight – again

THE Government seems to be changing its tune over London Mayor Boris Johnson's hopes for an estuary airport.

But they seem to forget that Kent has won the battle against such plans before, and with the gloves off once more, there's enough fight left to ensure victory again.

Rochester Airport
by Paul Jerreat

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Let's return to pedal power

SO many people are shopping, so many want goods delivered to their homes.

All those delivery vans add massively to the pollution on our roads. Why don't sellers use local bicycle deliverers?

Marika Sherwood, Oare

Deafened by this TV noise

MANY thanks to the writer of the letter regarding the awful background noises on television programmes.

One begins to wonder if anyone on TV is able to speak without some 'music' in the background, which seems to be too loud to even hear what is being said.

How I wish in all the nature programmes we could hear the birds singing, the rivers rushing by, and even the wind in the trees. Even Monty Don cannot walk down his garden path without percussion.

It is all so ridiculous and so unnecessary.

I understand many have voiced this opinion to the television studios, but to no avail. This could cut the cost of programmes in doing so.

I recall a garden programme in which Alan Tichmarsh entered the garden scene remarking how lovely it is to come into the garden and hear the birds in the morning.

We, the viewers, could not hear any birds – only the sounds of an orchestra.

Please, let us participate in being 'in' the picture; especially the elderly, or those who cannot get out and about as they once did,

At least let us enjoy the sounds of nature again.

There is a special place for music, but never intruding in another programme. I am sure am not alone in view.

Mrs DP Rumsey, Rainham

Modernising the Royal Mail

FOLLOWING the recent article in KoS (January 8) we would like to clarify some points about the modernisation of Royal Mail's operations in Kent.

Royal Mail is investing £70 million in improving our operations for our customers and for our people.

This includes building the new Medway mail centre in Rochester, and investing in new machinery for sorting mail faster and more efficiently.

Mail processing work will transfer to the new mail centre on a phased basis during spring/summer this year.

Royal Mail and the Communication Workers Union (CWU) are working jointly to ensure minimum disruption to individuals and to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

There is a joint commitment to avoiding compulsory redundancies at all costs and no individuals will be forced to reduce or increase their hours as part of the changes.

With people demonstrating reasonable flexibility, Royal Mail expects that everyone who wants to remain in the business will be able to do so.

Some people have chosen not to stay, and around 100 individuals have so far left on voluntary terms. A further 80 people are expected to leave on voluntary terms over the next few months.

These changes are vital to put Royal Mail on a secure and sustainable footing and enable us to continue to deliver a high level of service to our customers.

Keith Tomlinson, Medway plant manager, Royal Mail and Steve Wisely, CWU divisional representative

Motor mouth is just all talk

JEREMY Clarkson is a bit of an idiot and so are the people that act shocked at what he says.

That's his aim, he loves to shock. I feel sure he doesn't mean half the things he says, but it keeps him in the limelight and helps keep him on his vast salary.

Best to laugh it off I reckon.

Love the paper by the way.

Jo Coley, Minster on Isle of Sheppey

Trust Tories with education

I WAS delighted to see Sevenoaks will soon have a grammar school of its own.

This is to be encouraged.

Kent's education committee needs to put its foot firmly on this particular accelerator, even if, politically, Education Secretary Michael Gove is presently reluctant to do so.

The latest national figures show that in areas where the Conservatives have maintained control over the years, pass rates in GCSEs have been twice as high as in those areas where Labour has held sway.

The clear inference to be drawn is that you should either move to Tory-controlled areas or, if you can't, vote Conservative and often. Don't leave your children at the mercy of a Labour council.

The Labour party has betrayed our children, dumbing down educational standards, eviscerating universities, and in a spiteful act of vandalism, seeking to destroy our grammar school system which had, almost single-handedly, and for five centuries, brought about the very upward social mobility, equality and class eradication we all seek.

Now thanks to Labour's half-century of fumbling interference and bigoted reasoning, children from sink estates can expect to remain on sink estates, educationally disabled, intellectually stunted and prey to drugs, gang cultures and a lifetime of sofa polishing. It is a crime.

The shame is that Labour councillors and Members of Parliament can't be banged up for it. We need more grammar schools, not fewer.

Gerry O'Donnell, Ramsgate

Green policies tinted with red

RAY Duff really is an expert when it comes to cherry-picking reports he agrees with (Energy needs policy rethink, January 15).

The Greens' science is far from 'irrefutable', but to endlessly argue every fine point would be unproductive – though I could.

Suffice to say that suggestions for subsidised alternative energy are pipedreams that would cost this country dear.

For example, in countries that have gone for 'renewables' in a big way, experience has shown 'green jobs' are something of a myth; more are lost than gained, and renewables simply don't produce anywhere near enough consistent, reliable power.

The real revelation of his letter is what the Greens really stand for. Those "social, economic and environmental" ideas with their "cooperative society, social enterprises and worker councils" smack of neo-communism, social engineering with a puritanical bent.

Green is the new red.

Ian Taylor, Dover

ARCHANT KOS MEDIA ...WOULD LIKE TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS

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Will pension change for the good or bad?

TONY HETHERINGTON
MONEY CLINIC

I WORK for a company that is closing membership of its final salary pension scheme and instead will offer a 'defined contribution' scheme. We have been given a brochure about this, but I am sorry to say I cannot understand it. Can you explain in simple terms the difference between the two schemes and say whether I will get more pension or less?

LET me start with a bit of reassurance. The details you sent me show that the pension you have earned so far is safe, and your existing pension benefits are preserved. But the future is less predictable. You are currently in what is called a defined benefit scheme. Your employer promises a certain amount of pension and then tailors your contributions and the company's contributions so that when you retire there is enough money to pay your pension for the rest of your life. A defined contribution scheme stands this on its head. You and your employer will both pay contributions, but there is no promise of how much pension they will provide. Everything depends on two factors. First of all there is the question of where your pension contributions will be invested, and how well those investments will perform. And secondly, there is the question of what annuity rates will be like when you retire. However much there is in your pension pot will be used to buy you an annuity – a pension for life. But annuity rates change all the time, based on how long people are expected to live, and on whether interest rates are high or low. For example, roughly 20 years ago, a pension pot of £100,000 would have bought you an annuity of about £15,000 at age 65. Since then, life expectancy has increased, so annuity providers know they must pay out for longer, but interest rates have tumbled. The result is that £100,000 will now get you an annuity of less than £6,000 a year. Suddenly, job pensions have become unpredictable – unless you are lucky enough to be in one of the dwindling number of final salary schemes, like public sector workers are. There is no simple advice anyone can offer except perhaps to keep a regular watch on how your pension fund is growing. If it looks as if your pension will be less than expected, you may have time to increase your contributions, assuming you can afford to do this. It would be a pleasant surprise if your new pension scheme paid a bigger pension than the old scheme, so be prepared for a poorer retirement.

CAN I draw up a document with a solicitor, appointing someone to deal with selling my flat if I have to go into care?

YOU can give someone Power of Attorney, which means they can act for you and sign papers on your behalf. An Ordinary Power of Attorney is simplest, and you can limit the other person to looking after as much or as little of your affairs as you like. You can buy form CON36 from a legal stationers, or any solicitor or advice agency can help. But this type of power ends automatically if you cease to be able to make your own decisions. A Lasting Power of Attorney would continue in force, but this is rather more serious, and you should discuss this with a solicitor.

I GOT into debt and entered into an individual voluntary arrangement to pay off as much as I could, and my bank accepted this. Recently, someone at work let slip that they know about this. How has anyone found out?

VOLUNTARY arrangements between debtors and creditors are entered on a public register, I am afraid, and anyone can check the details here: www.insolvencydirect.bis.gov.uk/eiir.

HAVE you heard of Vanquis Bank, please? It is offering 3.35pc interest on savings deposited for one year. If you think it is unsafe, are any other banks paying this much?

VANQUIS Bank (0191 505 0033) is part of the big Provident Financial Group. It is fully licensed and savings up to £85,000 are protected by the usual compensation scheme. Another small bank – Investec Bank (0845 366 6333) – is offering 3.55pc on one-year savings, but its minimum deposit is £25,000. With Vanquis, the minimum is only £1,000.

AM I allowed to have a mortgage that will run until after I retire? With changes in the state pension system, I shall probably be 66 then.

IT IS perfectly legal, but your bank or building society will need to be convinced that you can afford to keep up the repayments, or that you have an investment plan that will pay off the loan.

■ If you have a personal-finance question, write to Tony Hetherington, MyMoney24, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1RE. We regret that neither Tony nor the MyMoney24 team can enter into personal correspondence.

Tread carefully in overdraft minefield

By Adam Aiken
Editor MyMoney 24

EVEN maths boffins struggle to understand how unauthorised overdraft charges work, with complex fee structures making it virtually impossible for customers to calculate how much they are going to be charged by their banks.

That's the verdict of consumer group Which?, after it asked a group of volunteers to work out how much they would be charged in a number of scenarios.

Despite one of the Which? volunteers being a maths PhD student, none of them got all the calculations right. Between them, they managed to get only seven out of 48 charges correct between them.

Which? said there were numerous complex rules and additional fees on top of overdraft charges. It said Lloyds TSB's fees were particularly confusing, with three different types of fees in addition to charging interest on unplanned overdrafts.

The research also found that customers at one institution can pay much more for unauthorised overdrafts than those at another.

For example, Nationwide charged the highest fees – £50 – for customers making one payment from their accounts while being overdrawn for two days in a row in a month. The equivalent fees at Halifax were £10.

Which? said it wanted the Financial Conduct Authority, the new regulator due in place later this year, to look at stopping unfair overdraft charges.

"While the Government has previously announced reforms to tackle unfair overdraft charges, they simply don't go far enough," said Which? chief executive Peter Vicary-Smith.

MONEY-GO-ROUND: Which? found differences in banks' overdraft costs

"It's extremely disappointing to find that bank charges are still too high, too complex and impossible to compare. It's essential the Government gives the new financial regulator the powers to limit these charges and to challenge their complexity.

"We want to see the new regulator put consumer protection at the heart of everything it does. The regulator must be a strong, open and proactive watchdog that stands up to the banks, not a lapdog."

The British Bankers' Association, the industry's trade body, made the point that unauthorised charges would not be applied to any accounts kept in credit or within agreed overdraft limits.

"Most customers don't go into an unauthorised overdraft," a spokesman said. "Those who do so regularly should consider asking for an overdraft limit or review the way they operate their account.

"Whichever way you operate your account it's important to shop around for the best deal that suits you. The major banks all provide six common charging scenarios on their websites to allow customers to see what charges they may incur if they were customers of that bank. They can then compare the relative costs between different banks."

The Which? research found that many banks used expensive daily fees. RBS charged £6 a day, equivalent to annual interest of 2,190pc, on a £100 unauthorised overdraft. This is the sort of rate charged by payday loan companies that made the headlines in the run-up to Christmas.

The BBA spokesman said: "The major banks recently announced a package of initiatives designed to introduce more transparency.

"These include text alerts if the account is getting close to an agreed limit; 'wiggle' room so that the customer won't be charged if they accidentally slip into the red by a small amount; and clearer information about when charges will be debited to the account and the point by which time during the day funds have to be paid into the account in order to avoid charges.

"Customers will also be able to opt out of overdraft facilities completely so that the account can't go overdrawn at all."

Take drop in interest rates with 'dose of caution'

HIGH street discounting in the run-up to Christmas has helped produce the biggest drop in inflation for nearly three years.

The consumer prices index (CPI) dropped to 4.2pc in December from 4.8pc the previous month, easing the pressure a little on spenders and savers, according to statistics published this week.

However, the rate still remains more than double the target of the Bank of England's monetary policy committee at a time when households continue to struggle thanks to high unemployment and stagnant wage growth.

"These figures are bang on prediction, but should be digested with a hearty dose of caution," said Tom Paterson, chief economist at Gold Made Simple.

"The economy is still in poor health and heavy discounting by retailers over Christmas and price cuts by the big energy companies will have distorted inflation in the short term.

"Also, it's worth remembering – above the sound of congratulatory back slapping – that inflation levels have now been above the government-mandated target of 2pc for the past two years.

"Whilst we could well see inflation tick lower for the next few months, with the possibility of energy companies cutting prices further and retailers extending their discounting beyond the January sales, the possibility that CPI will be anywhere near target a year from now, as confidently predicted by the Bank of England, is a fanciful one.

"The best we can hope for is that inflation sees a steady, but controlled decline over the next 12 months, ending the year at less painful levels."

According to Moneyfacts.co.uk, basic rate taxpayers still need to find savings accounts paying interest of 5.25pc a year just to enable their money to maintain its value after inflation and tax.

There are just eight standard savings accounts available at the moment that will allow these people to get real returns on their savings – and all of them are fixed-term Isas. There are no instant-access savings accounts that fit the bill.

Someone investing £10,000 five years ago would have the equivalent spending power of just £9,213 today, thanks to the corrosive effect of inflation over that period.

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Your business is our business

Chamber: 'HS2 can't come soon enough'

KEEN: Jo James says that extended connectivity can only be a good thing

By Nick Ames
nick.ames@archant.co.uk

THE high-speed rail line leading to St Pancras station has transformed Kent – and the county will reap further benefits from the £33 billion plan to link London and Birmingham via a second fast-train route, according to Jo James, chief executive of Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce.

Plans for the scheme were approved by the Government after Transport Secretary Justine Greening faced down protests from her own party's MPs to announce the decision for High Speed 2.

The scheme involves trains in 2026 travelling at speeds of up to 250 mph – 110 mph faster than the regular operating speed of the Ashford to London service currently in operation. Journey times between London and Birmingham will be halved to 49 minutes.

Ms James said: "The high-speed line transformed Kent when it opened and businesses will benefit from this latest move as markets, customers and clients in the North and Midlands are brought closer by rail.

"Following the opening of the first high-speed line, Kent has become a much more attractive place for businesses to relocate to and the county has also retained many businesses that might have gone elsewhere.

"Everybody says London is just 37 minutes from Ashford, but the major benefit for us is that the centre of Kent is just 37 minutes from London.

"This has been borne out as I have seen more and more London firms coming here to do business with local companies. And when they arrive, for client meetings for instance, we have the chance to showcase ourselves.

"For instance – the lifestyle we can offer. Kent is a great place to live and work, and more and more people are discovering that. The new route will open up opportunities even further."

Ms James accepted that the new route was 14 years in the future but added: "The news that it is going ahead is fantastic. It cannot come quickly enough. We need an excellent transport network in this country and Kent businesses will take advantage of that.

"It will be especially beneficial to our manufacturing industries. We have quite a lot of those and many do business across the country, so the new route will enable them to get their goods to customers much more quickly.

"Businesses in Kent and further afield will all benefit and the North-South divide will be greatly reduced."

"The sooner work starts, the sooner we will see the benefits."

Ms Greening announced that the network would be capable of transporting up to 26,000 passengers every hour.

High Speed 2 will link stations in London, Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield and the east Midlands, while high-speed trains will also connect other transport hubs such as Newcastle, Liverpool, York and Preston to link the east- and west-coast main lines.

Ms Greening said: "HS2 will link some of our greatest cities – and high-speed trains will connect with our existing railway lines to provide seamless journeys to destinations far beyond."

She added that the decision to go ahead with the proposals was not one she had taken lightly and much of the line would be out of sight to avoid disruption to those affected by the route.

The line will be constructed in two phases, with a 140-mile route built between London and Birmingham by 2026 and further lines linking Birmingham to Leeds and Manchester finished by 2033.

The world's fastest train operates in China on the Shanghai to Nanjing and Hangzhou routes. It can reach 298mph and carry 494 passengers.

Extend fast route to coastal towns, blasts Gale

MP Sir Roger Gale has called on Prime Minister David Cameron to extend the high-speed railway line across Kent.

Currently, services run at full operating speed to Ashford, but further on down the line they slow down considerably due to the infrastructure being unable to cope with the faster trains.

The Thanet North MP said such a move would be of vast benefit to the economy in the east of the county and to commuters.

Speaking during Prime Minister's Questions following the announcement of the £33 billion High Speed 2 route from London to Birmingham, the Kent MP said: "In congratulating the Government in its courageous decision to pursue High Speed 2, can I ask him [Mr Cameron] to turn his attention to unfinished business left by the last government?

TO THE LETTER: Sir Roger Gale MP wrote to the Prime Minister about a longer link

"High Speed 1 services only run from St Pancras to Ashford. Could he ask it to drive through services to Thanet, so we can see the sort of benefits that will be enjoyed by Birmingham?"

Mr Cameron replied: "I will look at what he says.

"High Speed 1 is an advert for what you can get from linking up the country with high-speed rail services, shortening commuter distances and helping change the economic geography of the country so we can build a stronger economy."

The Kent MP says he then wrote to Mr Cameron to further explain his view.

He told Archant KOS Media: "Effectively the high-speed service stops at Ashford for five minutes and then trundles on through the rest of Kent.

"I wrote to the Prime Minister to explain the problem is that while the train is fast and a good service to and from Ashford and St Pancras it is not so good for other parts of the county.

"Services to Charing Cross and Victoria now take longer as they stop more frequently and have to be timed to accommodate the new high-speed trains.

"Not too many people work around the St Pancras area – they work in the West End or Westminister, or around Victoria. So if they do use the high-speed service they have to cope with a Tube journey lasting at least 20 minutes – and of course the added expense. But this could be offset by extending the fast line.

"What I would like to see is a service which runs from the capital to a Thanet Parkway station, stopping at Ashford and Canterbury, forgetting Ebbsfleet and looking at how convenient it is for commuters to use Stratford before a decision is made on whether to stop there.

"The journey time should be an hour. I am probably one of the few people alive who has travelled in 60 minutes from London Victoria to Ramsgate. It was a special train, so it was a little bit of a cheat, but it shows it can be done.

"And that was a slam-door train on existing lines – clockwork, really.

"There would have to be upgrades of the line to allow the high-speed service to be extended as well as improvements in signalling, bridges and level crossings.

"That would cost money, but I feel any outlay would be very small in comparison with the benefits to the economy of east Kent."

The Kent MP said beneficiaries of such a project would include Manston airport and the Enterprise Zone that has been created near Sandwich in the wake of Pfizer's staff cuts.

HONOUR

OBE for work with service personnel

DAVID Ashman, partnership chairman at Reeves, one of Kent's leading accountancy and business advisory firms, has been awarded an OBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours list.

He was recognised for his voluntary service to the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) Forces Help.

The association was founded in 1885 and is the UK's oldest national military charity. It provides financial, practical and emotional assistance to current or former serving men and women from the Army, Navy and RAF and their families. SSAFA supports some 50,000 people each year with issues such as welfare, housing, health and social working, adoption and mentoring, among others.

Mr Ashman is national honorary treasurer of SSAFA, having worked with the Kent branch for over 22 years as branch treasurer. He became a trustee of the charity nine years ago and has been national honorary treasurer for the past three years. He has been awarded an OBE for his voluntary service to SSAFA.

He is also one of Reeves' charity and not-for-profit sector specialists.

On receiving this award, he said: "I am absolutely delighted to be recognised with this honour and for being part of such a deserving charity.

"The work SSAFA does is amazing and really makes a difference to people's lives. It is a privilege to support the volunteers who do so much to assist serving and ex-service men, women and their families who are in need."

Clive Stevens, managing partner at Reeves, based in Canterbury and Chatham, said: "I am delighted that David should receive this as it is extremely well deserved for the amount of time, effort and expertise David has given."

Confidence is waning as firms fear drop in domestic demand

By Nick Ames
nick.ames@archant.co.uk

FEARS of weakening prospects across the commercial world have knocked business confidence in Kent back to a two-and-a-half year low, according to the latest Business in Britain report from Lloyds TSB Commercial.

Firms remain particularly worried about the outlook for demand in domestic markets, the Eurozone and outside Europe, and are continuing to rein in recruitment and investment spending as a result.

The twice-yearly report, which canvasses the views of 294 Kent, East and West Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire and Dorset firms, shows business confidence has fallen to its lowest level since mid-2009, when the economy was starting to emerge from recession.

Paul Spencer, regional director for Lloyds TSB Commercial, said: "Export markets outside Europe will be the key to growth in what will undeniably be a tough start to the year.

"It is understandable that businesses are keeping the brakes on investment, given the volatile economic climate, but to break the cycle of dwindling confidence leading to slower growth, it is crucial firms do whatever they can to maximise opportunities, at home or overseas.

"Although export markets are strained, there are still opportunities for growth in countries outside Europe for those Kent businesses in a position to seize them. For our part, we are doing all we can to help businesses shape up to make the most of openings in these markets."

The Business in Britain confidence index tracks Kent businesses' views of likely sales, orders and profits for the coming six months and presents the overall 'balance' of opinion, weighing up the percentage of firms that are positive in outlook against those that are negative.

The overall confidence balance is the average of the individual balances, for sales (16 per cent), orders (15 per cent) and profits (-4 per cent) and has fallen to 9 per cent in the region from a balance of 17 per cent in July. This is broadly similar to the national confidence balance of 8 per cent.

FEELING THE FEAR: Businesses are holding back on investment amid fears for a drop in homegrown sales, which could hit the stability of their businesses

The issue weighing most heavily on the minds of businesses in Kent is faltering domestic demand. Almost three-fifths (56 per cent) of firms say they are more worried about weak markets at home than by any other potential threat to their business – a rise from 49 per cent.

However, businesses in the region are also increasingly concerned about overseas demand. More than a third (34 per cent) expect to grow their total exports during the first half of the year, but 16 per cent are braced for a fall, resulting in a balance of 18 per cent expecting exports to rise. This has slipped 29 per cent.

The decline in export prospects reflects weaker European demand. Eleven per cent of businesses expect exports to Europe to improve in the first half of the year, while 19 per cent anticipate weaker demand. The resulting balance of -8 per cent is weaker than the previous 31 per cent. The balance for exports to the rest of the world, at 18 per cent, also fell from 37 per cent.

Kent firms' uncertainties about the economic outlook are continuing to affect their investment intentions. Almost a fifth (18 per cent) say they plan to boost investment over the next six months, but 22 per cent plan to reduce it. The resulting negative balance of -4 per cent is 2 per cent lower than in July. Just over half (51 per cent) of companies say they plan to keep investment levels unchanged.

A similar picture emerges for recruitment. Almost a fifth (16 per cent) of Kent businesses say they intend to increase staff numbers during the first half of 2012, while 13 per cent are planning cuts. The result is a positive balance of 3 per cent, the same as July. The majority of the region's businesses (68 per cent) expect to keep staffing levels as they are.

Trevor Williams, Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets chief economist, said: "This latest survey suggests we could see a period of zero to slightly negative growth in the first six months of the year. The outlook further out will depend partly on whether sufficient progress can be made to resolve the euro crisis and whether businesses act to seize opportunities to invest and grow."

New chapter for telephony firm set to more than double in size

A TELEPHONE answering service-provider has trebled its office space at Kent Science Park.

GoResponse invested more than £100,000 in expanding and upgrading its headquarters, a move that has seen its 50-seat call centre capacity increased to 130.

The telephony firm, which started out with four members of staff in 2003, now employs 95 people and has the potential to take the number of names on the payroll up to 230.

Mark Kirby, managing director at GoResponse, said he was delighted with their expanded facilities.

"This is a new chapter for us," he said. "This expansion gave us the opportunity to create an environment unparalleled in the marketplace and a chance to redevelop how we provide our services.

"I'd like to thank Kent Science Park for their help. With their assistance we've grown from a four-man start-up to a company that employs nearly 100 people and has a turnover of £2.3 million. We're sure this growth will continue into 2012 and beyond."

James Speck, site director at Kent Science Park, said: "GoResponse is the latest of our tenants to take additional space at the park, having outgrown its original offices.

"Between us, and in difficult trading times, we have developed a different and very open landlord-and-tenant relationship, focusing on how to deliver value-for-money bespoke business space to GoReponse and our other growing tenants and, more importantly, making employment at KSP attractive."

Accountants make warren clearance their business

SAPLINGS planted in Boxley have been cleared of weeds and undergrowth, thanks to workers from the Maidstone branch of DSH Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors.

The eight-strong DSH green team helped clear the area around recently-planted box trees at Boxley Warren, helping them to become better established and thrive.

The new trees, which are only a few years old, were at risk of being crowded out by faster-growing plants.

Mike Philips, Mid Kent Downs projects officer, said: "I would like to thank the DSH team for giving up their time to help us in our work to encourage the new box trees to grow.

"In the past, box trees were very common in Boxley and gave the area its name. However, lack of woodland management, intensive farming, vandalism and neglect saw their numbers plummet to the point that there were only a few left.

"With the help of volunteers such as these, we are confident Boxley Warren will soon once again be home to several hundred established box trees."

Rosie Croucher, trainee accountant, said: "We were tasked with lopping, which was not as easy as we hoped, to clear space around the box trees.

"During the day we cleared three different sites around the warren, all of which were situated high up on steep slopes and made me realise I may not fit the definition of an 'averagely fit' person.

"It was a good day, despite being hard work. It is nice to know that we have benefited the environment around us, protecting the natural habitat in the warren."

Tobacco plant research in bid to combat HIV

By Nick Ames
nick.ames@archant.co.uk

SCIENTISTS on a quest to provide low-cost drugs to restrict the spread of HIV are working with plant specialists at East Malling Research (EMR) to find a solution.

The horticultural researchers are now successfully growing genetically-modified tobacco plants that exude a potentially life-saving drug through their roots. It is the first experimental set-up of its kind undertaken in Europe.

The EMR team, led by Dr Chris Atkinson, and Professor Julian Ma, of St George's, University of London, are seeking ways to use plants to produce large quantities of a drug known to block HIV infection.

Following the first year of trials with tobacco plants at EMR, Prof Ma is optimistic that the new techniques will enable effective HIV drugs and preventative medicines to be produced in plants where they are needed and in sufficient quantities to be available to millions of people in the next five years.

The plant-growing technologies being developed by EMR also raise the possibility of plants producing other drugs rapidly and in large quantities to counter serious pandemics.

In EMR's drug-production experiments, tobacco plants been transformed to produce a protein called cyanovirin-N, which research shows prevents HIV from binding to human cells. EMR is developing ways to grow the plants hydroponically in the research centre's secure containment facility, the UniGro 'GroDome'.

The dome's control and design sophistication allows carbon dioxide to be elevated, along with light levels and optimal temperatures, all of which can improve the rate of plant growth.

These factors are also being used scientifically to manipulate the way the plant produces the protein in the roots and show how specifically to maximise root growth.

EMR scientists are also developing procedures to promote the release of the cyanovirin protein into the hydroponic nutrient solution in which the plants are growing.

Being able to collect the protein from the nutrient solution flowing over the roots enables its extraction and purification to be much simpler than taking it from the leaves. It should also be much cheaper to extract from this solution.

The growth potential of the plants is monitored closely and manipulated to optimise the concentration of cyanovirin production.

Additionally, the facility also enables the tobacco plants to be propagated so that once the initial transformation has been achieved thousands of seeds containing the lifesaving drug can be produced.

Dr Atkinson, deputy chief executive at EMR, said: "This is a groundbreaking and globally-significant piece of research with huge potential.

"Tobacco is an ideal non-food crop for this, thanks to the speed it grows and matures and our deep knowledge of its physiology and transformability, which has been the focus of scientific attention for more than 20 years."

Prof Ma and EMR's work is a three-year investigation funded by the National Institutes Of Health, the US national medical research funding agency.

Cyanovirin is a protein produced by a cyanobacterium that occurs naturally in the blue-green algae found in a wide range of natural environments but possibly most known from being visible in large blooms across fresh water.

Prof Ma believes that one of the first uses for cyanovirin produced by tobacco plants will be in combination with two other HIV prevention drugs as a cream or gel for women to use to prevent infection during sexual intercourse.

"A combin-ation of drugs is important because the HIV virus, as with many viruses, can mutate rapidly," he said.

"Once we have perfected the technology for producing cyanovirin and delivered successful clinical trials, growing these plants around the world will be relatively simple."

QUEST: Professor Julian Ma and Dr Chris Atkinson of East Malling Research

ENVIRONMENT

Port's efforts win green recognition

THE Port of Dover has outperformed all other UK ports in a Government scheme.

This is the first mandatory scheme aimed at improving energy efficiency and cutting emissions in large public- and private-sector companies in the UK, and the port achieved a place in the top 3 per cent of the 2,000-plus organisations that participated.

The Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC) requires organisations using more than 6,000 MWh of electricity each year to measure and report on their carbon emissions.

Published by the Environment Agency, scores are based on the percentage of the company's emissions that are covered by a good energy-management accreditation and the installation of smart-meters to give detailed information on energy use.

With a weighted score of 2,092.50, 22 companies were ranked joint first; however, the port was not far behind with a weighted score of 2,040. The lowest score achieved was 402 and the average 1,052.

Bob Goldfield, port chief executive, said: "We are delighted that as one of the world's busiest ports we have achieved such a high ranking in this prestigious league table, confirming our ongoing commitment to excelling in environmental management."

Hundreds sign up for on-the-job training with apprentice scheme

CANTERBURY College has announced record numbers of young people joining its apprenticeship training programmes.

More young people than ever before have have signed up to Canterbury College's 39 apprenticeship courses, which include mechanical engineering, health and social care, childcare, accounting and dental nursing.

The college now has more than 450 apprentices, with the expectation of boosting this to more than 500 as the year progresses.

Mark Hill, director of business development, said: "The work we have done to engage employers and raise the profile of our apprenticeships is clearly paying dividends.

"These are a great investment for employers and are highly valued by many businesses as our great results prove. Our apprentices are among the most successful in Kent and a credit to the college."

Canterbury College is set to benefit from the Government's pledge of extra funding for apprenticeships when it launches its youth contract in April 2012.

The extra money will allow the college to add to its already-extensive range of apprenticeship courses. It will also give employers more contributions towards apprentices' wages.

Through apprenticeships, young people gain on-the-job training alongside studying for qualifications. Depending on the type of role, apprenticeships usually last between one and two years and give young people a firm footing within a company; some can also lead to a degree-level qualification.

The college's Canterbury Training and Recruitment (CTR) service plays a big role in getting young people into work.

CTR provides a bridge between students and businesses by advertising job vacancies, short-listing candidates, conducting initial interviews and arranging employer interviews. It also teaches students about working life and gives them employability training.

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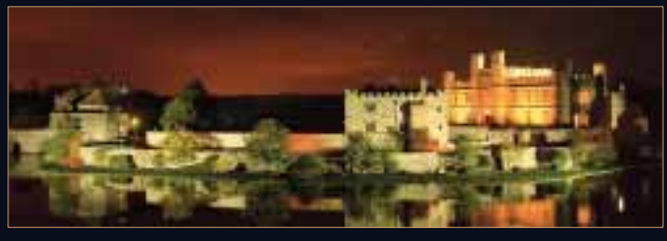

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or email hospitality@leeds-castle.co.uk

Training, courses and careers

30 apprenticeships on offer for youngsters

AN accredited training provider has the perfect 2012 start for unemployed teenagers and building firms across Kent: 30 funded apprenticeships.

"New Year is a time when we all think about new opportunities, so it's fantastic to be able to offer 30 youngsters who might otherwise be facing a bleak 2012 the chance to learn a skill for life – especially at a time when youth unemployment is continuing to grow," said Peter Samuel, director of SWAY UK, a specialist Construction Skills (Cskills) accredited training provider.

"Plus we can offer 30 small firms who are struggling to find sustainable ways to grow their business a chance to take on a carefully selected trainee at minimal cost with full support from us."

The openings are part of the first tranche of apprenticeships announced by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills in November.

"It's a win-win-win situation," said fellow director Kelly Oscar.

"The students get structured, quality training. The employers get an enthusiastic new recruit.

"And we have the delight of seeing youngsters grow in knowledge and confidence."

The students will work towards a Level 2 Diploma in fitted interiors and will learn key skills for installing kitchens and bathrooms, including plumbing, soldering, installing appliances and tiling.

Throughout their apprenticeship the youngsters will receive wages of £75 a week minimum.

"We're looking for students aged 16-18, ideally with maths and English GCSE minimum grades D-G, but technical ability, a hunger to learn and a professional attitude are essential," said Oscar.

Employers interested in taking on an apprentice need to be able to provide work that will cover the qualification requirements.

"The grant we have secured enables us partially to fund the student's placement, meaning employers can benefit from an enthusiastic trainee from as little as £2.60 an hour," explained Oscar.

"Plus SWAY UK will provide support to employers throughout the programme, including assessing the students' work."

Successful applicants will receive up to six weeks' pre-apprenticeship training with SWAY UK at its centre in Bromley before being matched to a suitable employer.

For the remaining nine-12 months of the programme the apprentices' weeks will be split – with two days' training at SWAY UK and three days on-the-job learning with their employer.

To find out more about the scheme, contact SWAY UK on 0208 466 6301 or email apprenticeships@swayuk.com. The deadline for student applications is January 22.

What is your business doing to help Keep Kent Working? Do you send employees on training courses to aid their personal development or run apprenticeship schemes? If you have a good news story email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk or call us on 01303 817136.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE: A SWAY UK student learning how to install kitchens

340 options for adult learners

FROM keeping chickens to designing an iPhone app, and starting up in business to relaxing alternative therapies, Medway's adult education curriculum for this year looks like it has something for everyone.

New courses include baking cakes, an introduction to bee-keeping, beginners' Latin and Punjabi, plus baby signing.

Cllr Howard Doe, portfolio holder for community services, said: "These course are all part-time so busy residents can fit them in around other commitments.

"Our courses offer learners the chance to enjoy some quality 'me' time, meet friends and learn new skills that could lead to a new hobby, career or business venture.

"If you've never tried adult education before, now's your chance."

Between January and July, MACLS will be running more than 340 courses.

Courses start throughout the year and learners can enrol at any time.

Most courses offer concessionary rates and for those out of work or on benefits, some of them are free.

New courses are added to the online course finder every month at the request of students. For more details and to search for more courses visit www.medway.gov.uk/adultlearning or phone 338400.

College courses for employers

THE Business Development Unit at MidKent College has a number of workshops coming up aimed at supporting employers.

All six events will be held at the Medway Campus on Medway Road, Gillingham, from 9.30am-4.30pm at a cost of £150 per person. The price also includes refreshments and a hot lunch.

The dates for the workshops are:

- Wednesday, January 25 – assertiveness training
- Friday, January 27 – negotiation skills
- Wednesday, February 1 – innovation and creativity (problem-solving)
- Wednesday, February 15 – project management
- Friday, February 17 – leadership style

The Business Development Unit at MidKent College offers four core business training services – apprenticeship advice, training courses, a recruitment shop, and business coaching and consultancy advice.

For more information call Claire Bridger on 01634 383581 or email claire.bridger@midkent.ac.uk. Alternatively call the Business Development Unit on 01634 383132/667.

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Smart thinking needed for new schools' computing curriculum

CHANGING the way ICT is taught in schools would be a "smart move" according to Kent County Council's education chief.

Pupils are currently "bored out of their minds" by the subject, according to Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, who hass launched a consultation on a new computing curriculum.

KCC cabinet member for education, learning and skills, Cllr Mike Whiting, said: "Technology has moved on dramatically but the pace of ICT lessons has not. This is great news for young people who quite frankly know how to use computers having grown up with them all their lives.

"Focusing on computer science and programming is a smart move and would open up all kinds of possibilities. Imagine if the next Angry Birds gaming phenomenon was created by a Kent student after learning programming skills at school.

"With the internet and smart phones being part of our everyday lives, there are many opportunities for a long-term, rewarding career in this sector."

A 2011 survey by the Office for National Statistics revealed that 77 per cent of British households have internet access – up 20 per cent on 2006.

Six million people also accessed the internet over their mobile phone for the first time between September, 2010, and August, 2011.

College's students beat the blues with Monday fun

MAGIC MAN: Dazzling Darren performed tricks

STUDENTS and staff at Canterbury College spread the happiness when they led a national campaign to beat this week's 'Blue Monday'.

The college hosted a series of events to combat the effects of what is termed the most depressing day of the year. There was magic, music, free food, a special chill-out zone, and more at the New Dover Road campus.

The event was run by the college's students' union. Its manager Tony Payne said: "The campaign is about changing the perception of a day seen as the most depressing date of the year. By holding events we gave people a reason to be cheerful.

"It's a great cause which aims to put a smile on people's faces at time when they really need it. It's a fun event for the students to get involved with, and one which reaches out to the wider community as well."

Students and staff enjoyed blue candy floss in exchange for posting positive messages on a communal wall. They were also treated to free cakes, all keeping with the blue theme. Magician Dazzling Darren was on hand to impress onlookers with a series of illusions including seemingly cutting off his own arm, and some students also took part in a question and answer session with Jeremy Gilley, founder of the ceasefire charity Peace One Day, via video link.

Students were keen to spread the message.

Ray Thompson, 18, a Level 3 BTEC performing arts student, said: "It seems to have created a positive atmosphere and it seems to be spreading. I think the message behind the campaign is great.."

Toby Esty, 17, who is studying a Level 3 BTEC in music technology, said: "It's a good cause and giving out free cakes and candy floss seems to be a good way of spreading the message.

"I'm planning on doing my part and helping someone out."

Fashion graduate is toast of the catwalk as she heads to Paris show

A graduate from the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) at Rochester has won an international fashion competition.

Lyudmila Lane, who graduated from BA (Hons) fashion design in July, 2011, beat entries from more than 50 colleges worldwide to win the Who's Next/Arts Thread Fashion Graduate Competition 2011.

As one of 10 winners, Lyudmila has won the opportunity to showcase her collection at the world-famous Who's Next Prêt-à-Porter trade show in Paris next week.

Lyudmila, who was a Gold Award finalist at London's Graduate Fashion Week (GFW) in 2011, said: "As a new designer hoping to enter the professional world of fashion, exhibiting my collection at Who's Next Prêt-à-Porter is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for me.

"The opportunity to show my creations to the public and meet influential fashion buyers from around the world is an amazing chance for me to establish my own label.

"Winning has given me a huge boost in both energy and aspiration – it's a huge step for my career and my dream of seeing people wearing my clothes out on the streets.

"I feel ready to go out and achieve my goals thanks to the support and guidance of the teaching staff at UCA who have given me the opportunity to uncover and expose my creative abilities."

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SOVA is a leading national volunteer mentoring organisation working with those socially and economically disadvantaged in England and Wales.

Serco Job Deal is an initiative designed to support offenders back into work by improving their employment prospects and tackling barriers to employment. SOVA is currently expanding this service within East Kent and now requires a Case Manager to implement this service.

Case Manager Ref: CMEK01

Hours: 35 per week (F/T)
Starting Salary: pt 25 (range 25-35) £21,421
Base: East Kent (Canterbury, Folkestone and Thanet)

The main purpose of this post is to work closely with Probation Service to provide case management to community payback participants referred to Serco Job Deal (Kent). The post holder will be required to implement this service and have the skills to set up and maintain strong relationships with both clients and partners/funders and other external stakeholders, in order to achieve targets.

For an application form and further details visit the SOVA website at
www.sova.org.uk

Or contact
SOVA Recruitment
Unit 201 Lincoln House
1-3 Brixton Road
London SW9 6DE
Telephone: **020 7793 5867** Email: **sa@sova.org.uk**
Clearly stating the post reference

Closing date: 31 January 2012 at 5pm.
Interview date: 17 February 2012

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Salary: £24,842 - £31,516 per annum (dependent on qualifications and experience)
Medway and Maidstone Campus

We are looking to recruit an exceptional candidate to join our Business Development Team to promote/market, co-ordinate and audit the College Apprenticeship programme. Responsibilities will include liaising with external organisations and managing the apprenticeship delivery within the curriculum areas. The successful candidate will have proven experience in managing and/or auditing WBL programmes and should have excellent communication and ICT skills.

Lecturer in Plumbing — Ref: P0396

Salary: £24,146 - £31,218 per annum (dependent on qualifications and experience)
Medway Campus

We are looking for an enthusiastic, highly motivated and well-organised lecturer to join our Plumbing & Heating section in the Faculty of Construction and Building Services. The successful candidate will be required to teach and assess on Plumbing, Heating Renewables or Gas - Building Services Engineering from Level 1 up to Level 3. The successful candidate will be qualified as an Advanced Plumber/Gas installer with significant practical experience in the BSE industry. The post holder will hold, or be willing to work towards, a recognised assessor and teaching qualification. Hourly paid positions also available. Please state your preference on application.

Lecturer in Health Care — Ref: P0323

Salary: £24,146 - £31,218 per annum (dependent on qualifications and experience)
Medway Campus

We are looking to appoint an experienced candidate to deliver Health Care programmes at various levels. The successful candidate will have the ability to motivate students and be flexible and adaptable in their teaching methods. The applicants must have a relevant vocational/academic qualification and have, or be willing to work towards, a teaching qualification. Recent industry experience would be advantageous.

Lecturer in Health and Social Care — Ref: P0485

Salary: £24,146 - £31,218 per annum (dependent on qualifications and experience)
Maidstone Campus

We are seeking a knowledgeable individual to deliver CACHE Health and Social Care programmes at various levels. The successful candidate will be flexible and adaptable in their teaching methods and have current knowledge and practical experience of the Health and Social Care Industry. The applicants must have a relevant vocational/academic qualification and have or be willing to work towards, a teaching qualification.

Student Financial Support Advisor — Ref: P0781

Salary: £13,807 - £18,066 per annum (dependent on qualifications and experience)
Medway Campus

We are looking to recruit an excellent candidate to provide friendly and approachable assistance to students throughout the College. The successful candidate will process applications to the student support funds, administer the resulting awards and communicate the outcomes to students and college departments via telephone, email and post. The ideal candidate will have proven experience within a customer service environment and a Level 2 qualification in business admin or equivalent.

Hourly paid Lecturer in Painting and Decorating — Ref: SESS09

Hourly Rate: £21.49 - £28.20 hourly (dependent on qualifications and experience)
Medway Campus

The College is seeking an outstanding candidate to deliver Painting and Decorating courses on levels E3, 1&2. The successful candidate will have proven knowledge and experience within the Painting and Decorating sector. We are looking for an interactive team member with strong communication skills. The ideal candidate will hold, or be willing to work towards, a recognised teaching qualification.

Hourly paid Lecturer in Hairdressing — Ref: SESS87

Hourly Rate: £21.49 - £28.20 hourly (dependent on qualifications and experience)
Maidstone Campus

We have an exciting opportunity to recruit a passionate individual to teach, assess and contribute to the development of Hair Design programmes. The applicant must have a relevant vocational/academic qualification and should hold, or be willing to work towards, a teaching qualification. Recent industry experience would be advantageous.

Closing date: Wednesday 1 February, 2012.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of employment is subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check in accordance with the College procedure.

Application forms and further details are available from **www.midkent.ac.uk**. Alternatively, please e-mail job.applications@midkent.ac.uk. For individuals without access to e-mail or the internet please call the HR department on **01634 383102** (24 hour answer machine). In all communication with the College please quote the appropriate job title and reference number.

MidKent College is an equal opportunities employer

MidKent College

PUBLIC/ COMMUNITY APPOINT

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BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS

Including family announcements in partnership with the Kent registration service

To register Births, Marriages and Deaths contact the Kent registration service on 0845 824 7400

For advertising announcement enquiries telephone Kent on Sunday 01303 817150

BIRTHS

JEFFREY
Ian and Natalie are pleased to announce the birth of their beautiful son Ollie Darren Jeffrey on 25th December 2011, weighing 8lb 1oz. Brother to Coby and Owen.

DEATHS

BARNETT
George Brian Barnett of Dartford passed away peacefully on the 30th December 2011. Will be sadly missed by his loving wife Ruth, his family and all who knew him. Funeral enquiries please contact Co-op Funeral Services Dartford. 01322 220006.

HARRIS
In Loving Memory of JOAN HARRIS of Wilmington, and latterly Faversham. Who recently passed away peacefully aged 94 in Kent and Canterbury Hospital.Beloved widow of Hugh and much loved mother of Peter, Barbara and Joy.

PLANNING

Swale BOROUGH COUNCIL

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

Swale Borough Council as Local Planning Authority has received the following applications which are being advertised to ascertain the views of persons living near the sites and other interested parties. The proposed developments relate to one or more of the following:

1. The site of the application is within/affecting a designated Conservation Area (Section 73) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
2. The proposed development may affect the Listed Building or it's setting.
3. The application is for a Major Development.
4. The application would affect a right of way to which Part III of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) applies.
5. The application does not accord with the provisions of the Development Plan.
6.. This application may be of wider public interest.
7. This application affects trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order.
8. This application is accompanied as an Environmental Statement.

REPRESENTATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS MUST BE MADE BY 6th February 2012

SW/08/0344:
Change of use to caravan site for gypsy family and erection of four day rooms - Mattsfield, Adj 2 Libbetswell, Boxted Lane, NEWINGTON; **REASON 4**

SW/11/1459:
Change of use of field for the keeping of horses with stable building and ménage - Orchard Thatch, London Road, TEYNHAM; **REASONS 2 & 3**

SW/11/1476:
Variation of condition (4) of SW/06/0829 to allow loading of trailers Monday to Friday, 0700 to 1900, and to allow access to vehicles Monday to Friday 0500 to 2000 - Thames Reinforcements Limited, New Road, SHEERNESS; **REASONS 3 & 4**

SW/11/1537:
Approval of all reserved matters, pursuant to outline permission SW/08/1127, for erection of 187 dwellings on part of the site - Coleshall Farm, Sheppey Way, IWADE; **REASONS 3, 4, 6 & 2**

SW/11/1538:
Minor amendment application to SW/09/0756 to vary condition 32, by substituting drawings to make slight revision to layout, resulting in substitution of 4 larger houses with 8 smaller units - creating a net increase of four additional units within the existing permitted development site - Parcel 8 (Land east of Woodpecker Drive & Helen Thompson Close), IWADE; **REASON 3**

SW/11/1548:
Change of use from retail shop within Class A1 a Town & Country Planning (Use Classess) Order 1987 as amended to a nail bar (sui generis) - 61 High Street, SHEERNESS; **REASON 1**

SW/12/0005:
Erection of a single storey rear extension - 25 Ospringe Road, FAVERSHAM; **REASON 1**

SW/12/0014:
To take down and rebuild garden wall to rear of property, and inclusion of pair of gates - 58 Newton Road, FAVERSHAM; **REASON 1**

SW/12/0015 &
SW/12/0016:
Replacement detached garage - Blackbird Cottage, Luddenham, NR FAVERSHAM; **REASON 2**

Particulars of the proposal(s) can be obtained from Planning Services, Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, where copies of the applications and all documents submitted with them may be inspected during office hours; any representations should be made in writing to this address.

James Freeman
Head of Planning

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY & VILLAGE GREENS

PROW IN THE BOROUGH OF ASHFORD

NOTICE OF THE MAKING OF AN ORDER TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY AW244 IN THE PARISH OF GREAT CHART WITH SINGLETON

(PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY AW244) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984, SECTION 14(1) AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Kent County Council has temporarily closed Public Bridleway AW244 between Bucksford Lane (Singleton Hill) and the junction with Public Footpath AW232 (NGR TQ 980 413) from the 9th January 2012.

The route will be closed for a maximum of six months, although it is expected that it will reopen before March 2012.

The route is to be closed because works are planned on it and there is a likelihood of danger to users.

The alternative route runs parallel to the bridleway and will be signed for the duration of the closure.

For detailed enquiries please contact: Faye Faiers

NOTICE OF PUBLIC PATH ORDER
HIGHWAYS ACT 1980

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

(PUBLIC FOOTPATH AU58A ASHFORD)
PUBLIC PATH EXTINGUISHMENT AND DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT MODIFICATION ORDER 2011

The above Order made under Section 118 of the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish the entire width of that length of Public Footpath numbered AU58a which commences between number 38 and 40a Silver Hill Road (NGR TR 0333 4240) (Point A) and runs in a west south-westerly direction for 61 metres to NGR TR 0327 4238 (Point B), the route then turns in a south-westerly direction for 106 metres to its termination at the M20 motorway (NGR TR 0320 4230) (Point C). Between points A,B and C on the Order plan.

All directions general, all distances approximate.

A copy of the Order and the Map have been placed and may be seen free of charge at the Ashford Borough Council, Ashford Gateway Plus, Church Road, Ashford, TN23 1AS or the Kent County Council, Environment & Waste at Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14 1XX during office hours. Copies of the Order and Map may be purchased there.

Any representation about or objection to the Order may be sent in writing to Matthew Garvey at the address below (Tel: 01622 221971) before 20 February 2012. Please state the grounds on which they are made.

Please note that objections/representations cannot be treated as confidential and may come into the public domain. Copies of any objections or representations received may be disclosed to interested parties, including the Planning Insepctorate where the case is referred to it for determination.

If no representations or objections are duly made, or if any so made are withdrawn, Kent County Council may confirm the Order as an unopposed Order. If the Order is sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment for confirmation any representations and objections which have not been withdrawn will be sent with the Order.

PROW IN THE CITY OF CANTERBURY

NOTICE OF CONFIRMATION OF PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION AND DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT MODIFICATION ORDER

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980
WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

(PUBLIC FOOTPATH CB15 (PART) AT BLEAN) PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION AND DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT MODIFICATION ORDER 2011

On 5th January 2012 the Kent County Council confirmed the above Order under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980.

The effect of the Order as confirmed is to divert the entire width of that length of public footpath numbered CB15, which commences at NGR TR 1365 6110 (point A on the Order plan) and runs in a west-south-westerly direction for 106 metres to NGR TR 1355 6107 (point B on the Order plan), to a new length of footpath CB15 with a width of 2.5 metres, which commences at the aforementioned point A and runs in a north-north-westerly direction for 19 metres (to Point C on the Order plan), thence in a west-south-westerly direction for 98 metres (to point D on the Order plan) and thence in a south-south-easterly direction for 26 metres to its connection with Tyler Hill Road (U11539) at NGR TR 1355 6106 (point E on the Order plan).

All directions general, all distances approximate.

A copy of the Order as confirmed and the Order Map have been placed and may be seen free of charge at the Offices of Canterbury City Council, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1YW or at the Countryside Access Service, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX, during office hours. Copies of the confirmed Order and Map may be purchased there.

The Order comes into force on 5th January 2012, but if a person aggrieved by the Order wants to question its validity, or that of any provision contained in it, on the ground that it is not within the powers of the Highways Act 1980, as amended, or on the ground that any requirement of the Act, as amended, or of any regulation made under the Act which has not been complied with in relation to the Order, he or she may under Paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Act as applied by Paragraph 5 of Schedule 6 to the Act, within 6 weeks from the 22nd January 2012, make an application to the High Court.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC PATH ORDER
HIGHWAYS ACT 1980

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

(PUBLIC FOOTPATH CB432 & CB442 (PART) PETHAM) PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION AND DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT MODIFICATION ORDER 2011

The above Order made under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 to divert the entire width of (a) that length of public footpath numbered CB432 which commences at NGR TR 1225 5122 (Point A) on the Order plan, and runs in a south south-easterly direction for 198 metres to NGR TR 1231 5103 (Point B), the route then turns in a south-easterly direction for 45 metres to NGR TR 1235 5101 (Point C) where Public Footpath CB432 meets Public Footpath CB442; and (b) that length of public footpath numbered CB442 which commences at NGR TR 1225 5099 (Point D) and continues in an east north-easterly direction for 97 metres to NGR TR 1235 5101 (Point C); and that length of public footpath CB432 which commences at NGR TR 1235 5101 (Point C) and continues in a south easterly direction for 12 metres to NGR TR 1236 5100 (Point E). Between points A-B-C-D-E on the Order plan.

And will add a new length of (a) public footpath numbered CB432 with a width of 2.0 metres which commences at NGR TR 1225 5122 (Point A) and runs in a southerly direction for 236 metres to NGR TR 1225 5099 (Point D); and a new length of (b) public footpath numbered CB442 with a width of 2.0 metres which commences at NGR TR 1225 5099 (Point D) and continues in a south-easterly direction for 72 metres to NGR TR 1231 5094 (Point F). Between points A-D-F on the Order plan.

All directions general, all distances approximate.

A copy of the Order and the Map have been placed and may be seen free of charge at the Canterbury City Council, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1YW or the Kent County Council, Environment & Waste at Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14 1XX during office hours. Copies of the Order and Map may be purchased there.

Any representation about or objection to the Order may be sent in writing to Matthew Garvey at the address below (Tel: 01622 221971) before 20 February 2012. Please state the grounds on which they are made.

Please note that objections/representations cannot be treated as confidential and may come into the public domain. Copies of any objections or representations received may be disclosed to interested parties, including the Planning Inspectorate where the case is referred to it for determination.

If no representations or objections are duly made, or if any so made are withdrawn, Kent County Council may confirm the Order as an unopposed Order. If the Order is sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment for confirmation any representations and objections which have not been withdrawn will be sent with the Order.

PROW IN THE BOROUGH OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION AND DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT MODIFICATION ORDER

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980
WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

(PUBLIC FOOTPATH WC5A (PART) AT GOUDHURST) PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION AND DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT MODIFICATION ORDER 2011

On 5th January 2012, the Kent County Council confirmed the above Order under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980.

The effect of the Order as confirmed is to divert the entire width of that length of public footpath numbered WC5A, which commences at NGR TQ 7447 3954 (point A on the Order plan) and runs in an east-north-easterly through to south-easterly direction for 146 metres to NGR TQ 7461 3952 (point B on the Order plan), to a new length of footpath WC5A with a width of 3 metres, which commences at the aforementioned point A and runs in an east-south-easterly through to a north-easterly direction for 147.5 metres to the aforementioned point B.

All directions general, all distances approximate.

A copy of the Order as confirmed and the Map have been placed and may be seen free of charge at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, The Gateway, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 2AB or at the Countryside Access Service, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX, during office hours. Copies of the Order and Map may be purchased there.

The Order comes into force on 5th January 2012, but if a person aggrieved by the Order wants to question its validity, or that of any provision contained in it, on the ground that it is not within the powers of the Highways Act 1980, as amended, or on the ground that any requirement of the Act, as amended, or of any regulation made under the Act which has not been complied with in relation to the Order, he or she may under Paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Act as applied by Paragraph 5 of Schedule 6 to the Act, within 6 weeks from the 22nd January 2012, make an application to the High Court.

VILLAGE GREENS IN THE BOROUGH OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMONS ACT 2006 - SECTION 15(1)

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR THE REGISTRATION OF LAND AS A VILLAGE GREEN

Application has been made to the Registration Authority, Kent County Council, by Mr. J. Davis under section 15(1) of the Commons Act 2006 and in accordance with the Commons Registration (England) Regulations 2008. The application seeks the inclusion in the Register of Town and Village Greens of the land described in the Schedule below which is claimed to have qualified for registration as a Town or Village Green by virtue of the use of the land for the purposes of lawful sports and pastimes 'as of right' and without challenge by the landowner for a period of over 20 years.

If the Registration Authority is satisfied that the land described below qualifies for registration as a Town or Village Green, it will so register the land.

The application, which includes a plan of the land proposed for registration, may be inspected at the offices of Kent County Council at the address below. Please contact the Commons Registration Team on 01622 221628 to make an appointment prior to visiting to ensure that a member of the team is available to assist you.

Any person wishing to make representations regarding the application should send a written statement of the facts upon which the representation is based to Miss. Melanie McNeir at Kent County Council, either by post at the address below or by email to commons.villagegreens@kent.gov.uk, **so as to arrive no later than Monday 5th March 2012**. Please quote reference VGA634. Representations must include the name and postal address of the person making them and the nature of their interest (if any) in the land affected by the application. They must also be signed by the person making them and state the grounds on which they are made.

Please note that any representations that are to be taken into account by the Registration Authority in reaching a decision on the application cannot be treated as confidential and may come into the public domain during the processing of the application. Copies of any objections or representations received will be forwarded to the applicant for comment and may be disclosed to other interested parties, including the Planning Inspectorate where the case is referred to it for determination.

Description of the land claimed to have qualified for registration as a Village Green

An area of land of approximately 4.2 acres (1.7 hectares) in size, consisting of a playing field known locally as Rammell Field, situated at the junction of Bakers Cross and Frythe Way in the parish of Crabrook.

Countryside Access Service
Kent County Council
Invicta House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1XX **Dated: 22 January 2012**

This document is available in alternative formats and can be explained in a range of languages.

For further information, please contact Kent Countryside Access Service, on 0845 345 0210 (Mon-Fri 8am-8pm) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccess

Kent County Council

HIGHWAYS

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Ashford

NEW RENTS, ASHFORD (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to replace a drainage channel and reset block paving, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on New Rents, Ashford, on or after 6 February 2012 for up to 4 weeks or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed in short sections for its entire length.

The planned closure times are between 9.00 am and 4.00 pm.

There is no alternative route whilst the road is closed.

HIGHWAYS - District of Canterbury

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

(A290 WHITSTABLE ROAD, BLEAN) (RESTRICTED ROAD TRAFFIC) ORDER 2012

Notice is hereby given that Kent County Council propose to make the above named order under Sections 82 (1) and 87 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act:-

The effect of the order will revoke the order: The Kent County Council (A290, Blean) (40mph Speed Limit) Order 2004. By revoking this order Whitstable Road, Tile Kiln Hill and Blean Hill A290 will become a (30mph) restricted speed road by the presence of street lighting.

Full details are contained in the Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended by the proposals and a statement of reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays at Kent County Council Highways, Javelin Way

Ashford, TN24 8AD, between 8.30am and 5.00pm, and at Canterbury City Council, Military Road, Canterbury, during normal opening times.

If you wish to offer support for or object to the proposed Order you should send the grounds in writing to the Traffic Schemes and Member Highway Fund Manager, Kent County Council Highways, Javelin Way, Ashford, TN24 8AD or by email to TRO@kent.gov.uk by noon on Monday 13th February 2012.

HIGHWAYS - District of Dover

RICHBOROUGH ROAD, ASH (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of carriageway repairs, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Richborough Road, Ash, from 6 February to 15 February 2012 inclusive, or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed from in the vicinity of the property called Trevone to the junction with Cop Street Road.

The alternative route is via Cop Street Road, A257 Ash By-pass, Sandwich Road, The Causeway, Ash Road and Richborough Road.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

(VARIOUS ROADS, DOVER DISTRICT) (WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND STREET PARKING PLACES) CONSOLIDATION (AMENDMENT NO 10) ORDER 2012

Notice is hereby given that KENT COUNTY COUNCIL propose to make the above named Order under sections 1(1), 2(1) to (3), 3(2), 4(1) and (2), 32(1), 35(1), 45, 46, 49 and 53 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Paragraph 20 of Schedule 9 to the Act:

The effect of the Order will be:-

Location	Proposal
Fulbert Road / Melbourne Avenue, Dover	Double yellow lines at the junction
Paradise Row, Sandwich	Double Yellow lines from the junction with Strand Street for a distance of 40m

Full details are contained in the draft Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended by the proposals and a statement of reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays at Kent County Council Highways and Transportation, Javelin Way, Ashford, TN24 8DH, between 9am and 5.00pm, and at Dover District Council Offices, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent, CT16 3PJ

If you wish to offer support for or object to the proposed Order you should send the grounds in writing to The Transportation and Development Manager, Kent County Council Highways and Transportation, Ashford Highway Depot, 4 Javelin Way, Henwood Industrial Estate, Ashford, TN24 8AD or by email to traffic.schemes@kent.gov.uk by noon on Monday 13 Febuary 2012.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Gravesham

ARTHUR STREET (WEST), GRAVESEND- (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic in Arthur Street West, Gravesend with the junction of Darnley Street.

The Order will become effective on 6th February 2012, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last 3 days, the road closure will be restricted to 9:30hrs to 15:00hrs wherever possible. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Arthur Street (West), Darnley Road, Lennox Road East and The Avenue

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate laying of duct in the Carriageway

LOWER ROCHESTER ROAD GRAVESHAM (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council Has made an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Lower Rochester Road from its junction with Church Street to Town Road/Lower Rochester Road.

The Order will become effective on, 23rd January 2012 will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; and last 2 weeks from the hours of 08:00am - 17:00pm. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Lower Rochester Road, A289 Wainscott by Pass, A226 Gravesend Road, Forge Lane and School Lane.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate carriageway patching works.

VARIOUS ROADS, GRAVESHAM (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic in schedule 1.

The Order will become effective on 6th February 2012, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last as noted in Schedule 1. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via schedule 1:

Schedule 1

Road name: **Dean Road, Luddesdown**

Date: 6th February 2012 for 2 weeks - during the hours of 08:00am - 17:00pm

Extent: From Dean Lane to Oakendean Road.

Diversion: Dean Lane, Chandlers Hill, Brimstone Hill and Oakendean Road

Road name: **Hermitage Road, Higham**

Date: 6th February 2012 for 3 weeks during the hours of 08:00am - 17:00pm

Extent: From Forge Laneto Lower Rochester Road

Diversion: Lower Rochester Road and School Lane

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate carriageway Resurfacing works.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Maidstone

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

(VICARAGE LANE, EAST FARLEIGH) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Vicarage Lane outside numbers 10 and 12 on or after Saturday 11th February 2012 for a period of up to 9 days or until such works are complete.

The alternative route is via Wilsons Lane, Gallants Lane, B2010 Lower Road.

KCC Highways apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works that are necessary to build a rick wall and install pedestrian railings. Should you require any further information about these works, the contact is Lisa Gillham on 08458 247 800.

HIGHWAYS - District of Sevenoaks

IDLEIGH COURT ROAD, ASH CUM RIDLEY (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has Made an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Idleigh Court Road, Ash Cum Ridley from Shipley Hills Road to New Street Road.

The Order will become effective on 22nd January 2012, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to commence on 23rd January 2012 and last 3 days. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: approaching from the East, South along A227 Wrotham Road then West along Chapmans Hill and then North along New Street and New Street Road. The closure when approaching form the West is the same but reversed.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate carriageway patching.

PENSHURST ROAD, BULLINGSTONE (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Penshurst Road, Penshurst between the junctions of Bullingstone Lane and Poundsbridge Hill.

The Order will become effective on 22 January 2012 and will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to commence on 23 January 2012 and will last three days. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Barden Road, Penshurst Lane, Worthfields

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate a replacement BT pole

SANDY LANE SEVENOAKS (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Sandy Lane at the Junction of Quakers Hall Lane.

The Order will become effective on 05/02/2012 and will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to commence on 06 February 2012 and will last 4 week.s These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Hartsland Road, Quakers Hall Lane.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate gas mains replacement.

HIGHWAYS - District of Shepway

EAST STREET, FOLKESTONE (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to provide a new water connection, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on East Street, Folkestone, on or after 6 February 2012 for up to 3 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed from adjacent to 25 The Stade to 1 East Street.

Access remains via The Stade and the east junction of East Street.

HIGHWAYS - District of Swale

BRIDGE ROAD, SHEERNESS (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of carriagway resurfacing, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Bridge Road, Sheerness, on or after 12 February 2012 for up to 1 night or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed in the vicinity of the bridge over The Moat, with no access for through traffic between the 2 roundabouts.

The alternative route is via A249 Brielle Way, A250 Queenborough Road, Halfway Road, High Street, Millennium Way and Bridge Road.

It is planned that these works will be carried out from 7.00 pm until 7.00 am.

PLOUGH ROAD, EASTCHURCH (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of carriageway patching works, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Plough Road, Eastchurch, on or after 6 February 2012 for up to 3 weeks or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed between the junctions with B2008 Chequers Road and Warden Road, with no access for through traffic.

The alternative route is via High Street, Lower Road, B2008 Eastchurch Road, Plough Road, Marrowbone Hill and Plough Road.

The planned closure times are between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm each day with the road re-opened outside these hours.

PRESTON STREET, FAVERSHAM (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of repairs to a wastewater pipe, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Preston Street, Faversham , on or after 23 January 2012 for up to 5 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed to the south of the junction with Market Street / East Street.

The alternative route is via East Street, B2041 Newton Road, Station Road and Preston Street.

The One-way Traffic Order in respect of Preston Street will be temporarily suspended from the junction with Stone Street to allow access up to the point of closure.

THE STREET, IWADE (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of gas mains replacement works, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on The Street, Iwade, on or after 30 January 2012 for up to 8 weeks or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed between the junctions with School Lane and Sanderling Way.

There will be no access for through traffic using The Street.

The alternative route is via Ferry Road, Sheppey Way, Grovehurst Road,A249 Iwade By-pass and Sheppey Way.

Please note that this date differs from that initially publicised.

WILDMARSH ROAD, LUDDENHAM (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of cable replacement works, Kent County Council

For further information, please contact Kent County Council Highways and Transportation, on 08458 247 800 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways

Kent County Council

has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Wildmarsh Road, Luddenham, on or after 24 January 2012 for up to 3 days, between 9.30 am and 3.30 pm.

The road will be closed in the vicinity of Lily Cottage.

The alternative route is via Elverton Lane, Lower Road, (Bysing Wood Road) and Luddenham Hill.

HIGHWAYS - Thanet and Dover

A256 RAMSGATE ROAD, SANDWICH & SANDWICH ROAD / RICHBOROUGH WAY, RAMSGATE (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

For the safety of the public during demolition works, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic and pedestrians as detailed below, on or after Sunday 12 February 2012 for up to 1 day.

It is planned that the closure should be completed within one hour during the day, as signposted on site.

If it is not possible for these works to go ahead on 12 February 2012, they will be deferred until one of the following 2 Sundays.

The A256 Ramsgate Road, Sandwich & Sandwich Road / Richborough Way, Ramsgate, will be closed in the vicinity of Richborough Port.

There will be no access for through traffic between the north junction with A256 Sandwich By-pass and the new Sevenscore Roundabout.

The alternative route will be indicated by appropriate signage on the day.

Public Footpath EE42 will be closed from where the exclusion zone meets the footpath, as shown by signs and barriers on site.

HIGHWAYS - District of Thanet

CHURCH ROAD, BROADSTAIRS (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to re-lay an electrical cable to cure local faults, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Church Road, Broadstairs, on or after 23 January 2012 for up to 1 week or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed in the vicinity of the junction with Nelson Place.

The alternative route is via B2052 Nelson Place, Rectory Road and Shutler Road.

COTTINGTON ROAD, MINSTER (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of a structural and safety inspection of the railway bridge, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Cottington Road, Minster, on or after 6 February 2012 as shown below.

The road will be closed in the vicinity of the railway bridge.

The planned closure times are from Monday 6 February 2012 at 10.00 pm until Tuesday 7 February at 6.00 am.

The alternative route is via Foads Lane, Cliffs End Road, A256 Sandwich Road, Lord of the Manor Interchange, A299 Canterbury Road West, Cliffsend Roundabout, A299 Hengist Way, Sevenscore Roundabout and Cottington Link.

THANET ROAD, BROADSTAIRS (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to provide a new water connection, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Thanet Road, Broadstairs, on or after 6 February 2012 for up to 3 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed in the vicinity of number 24.

There will be no access for through traffic between Prospect Place and Albion Street.

The alternative route is via Albion Street, High Street, Prospect Place and Thanet Road.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Tonbridge & Malling

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

(WATERINGBURY ROAD, EAST MALLING) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Wateringbury Road outside number 122 on or after Saturday 11th February 2012 when required for a period of up to 9 days or until such works are complete.

The alternative route is via Chapel Street, High Street, New Road,A20 London Road,A228 Ashton Way, A228 King Hill,A228 Malling Road, A26 Tonbridge Road and Red Hill and vice versa.

UK power Networks apologise for any inconvenience caused but it is necessary for work to be carried out to install services to a new property.. Should you require any further information about these works, their contact is Kevin Mcdermott of Murphy Limited on 07773803611.

John Burr
Director Kent Highways
Invicta House
County Hall,
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ

Dated 22nd January 2012

For further information, please contact Kent County Council Highways and Transportation, on 08458 247 800 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways

Kent County Council

Planning applications

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

Notice under Article 8 of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995
Notice under Section 67 and/or Section 73 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Notice under Regulation 5 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990
Notice under Regulation 5A of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2004

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the council:

CA//11/01917/FUL: Canterbury Cathedral Lodge, Canterbury Cathedral, The Precincts, Canterbury CT1 2EH Installation of solar panels to east and south facing roof slopes. **Applicant: Canterbury Cathedral** Reason: Setting of listed building in conservation area.
CA//11/01982/FUL: 24 Roper Road, Canterbury CT2 7EG Conversion of No 24 Roper Road from 3 no flats to single dwelling; proposed 3 no dwellings (1 no three bed; 2 no two bed) to rear with new access road and detached garage for No 24 to rear. **Applicant: Jenner Contractors Ltd** Reason: Conservation area.
CA//11/02070/LB: Waters Edge, 7 Central Parade, Herne Bay, CT6 5HT Replacement windows to front and side elevations.
Applicant: Mr S Acteson Reason: Work to a listed building.
CA//11/02087/VAR: Palmer House, 13 Station Road East, Canterbury, CT1 2RB Variation of condition 06 of planning permission CA/11/1143/ADV to allow an advertising hoarding. **Applicant: Catching Lives** Reason: Conservation area.
CA//11/02107/FUL: 64 London Road, Canterbury, CT2 8JZ Alterations to existing front wall and a new gate to driveway entrance.
Applicant: Mr Schultz Reason: Conservation area.
CA//11/02130/FUL: Waters Edge, 7 Central Parade, Herne Bay, CT6 5HT Replacement windows to front and side elevations.
Applicant: Mr S Acteson Reason: Conservation area.

Any representations should be sent in writing to the Head of Planning and Regeneration, Canterbury City Council, Military Road, Canterbury CT1 1YW or e-mailed to **development.control@canterbury.gov.uk** to arrive on or before **Monday 13 February 2012**.

The weekly list of applications can be viewed on our website at: **www.canterbury.gov.uk/dc**

Ian Brown, Head of Planning and Regeneration
Friday 20 January 2012

To place your notice here, call the Kent Public Notice team on 01303 817044

PLANNING

Town and Country Planning Acts

The Council is required to give notice of the following applications

12/00036/HOUSE **The Oast Crittenden Road, Brenchley**
- Extension of time (planning permission reference TW/08/03916): Two single storey extensions and a single storey link (LB)

11/03861/FUL **30A Church Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Culverden**
- Conversion of suite C to residential and internal alterations (LB) (CA)

11/03866/LBC **30A Church Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Culverden**
- Listed Building: Conversion of suite C to residential and internal alterations (LB)

11/03550/HOUSE **1 Church Cottages Church Road, Goudhurst**
- Conservatory to rear elevation (CA)

11/03875/FUL **The Bespoke Kitchen Unit 1, Goudhurst**
- Single storey extension (LB)

12/00018/HOUSE **9 Claremont Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Pantiles & St Marks**
- Internal alterations, alteration to porch, change of materials to part of front elevation, door altered, addition of window to gable end, addition of 3no rooflights, enlargement and replacement of rear first floor windows, addition of new folding sliding door to rear elevation (LB) (CA)

12/00053/HOUSE **13 Buckingham Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Pantiles & St Marks**
- Single-storey rear extension (CA)

11/03874/HOUSE **38 & 40 Princes Street Royal Tunbridge Wells, Park**
- (Nos. 38 & 40) Single storey rear extensions. (No. 40 only) Single storey side extension; front infill two storey extension with removal of one first floor window and enlarge existing first floor window opening to fit two new windows on front (north east) elevation and pitched roof over existing side extension (CA)

12/00057/FUL **Spa Garage Langton Road, Rusthall**
- Infill front extension to facilitate use as dual motor franchise (CA)

11/03867/FUL **St James Court Wood Street, St James**
- Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 9 houses (CA)

(DEVPLN) Departure from the Development Plan (PROW) Affecting A Public Right of Way (CA) Affecting a Conservation Area (LB) Affecting a Listed Building (MAJOR) Major Applications (MAST) Mast Applications (EIA) Applications Accompanied by an EIA Statement.

You may view these applications on our website (www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk), at the The Old Fire Station, Stone Street, Cranbrook or at Gateway, 8 Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells. We accept comments online, by email to planningcomments@tunbridgewells.gov.uk or in writing to the address below. Comments should be made within 21 days from the date of this notice, although we may accept them after this date.

You should quote the reference and be aware that we make all comments available for inspection, placing them on the file and publishing them on the internet. We do not publish signatures, telephone numbers or email addresses on the internet.

Jim Kehoe
Head of Planning Services
Town Hall Royal Tunbridge Wells TN1 1RS

Dated 21 January 2012

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

THE MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
Town and Country Planning Act
Notice of Applications

MA/11/1934/S - MEREWORTH HOUSE, LADDINGFORD, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME18 6BU - Erection of a two storey rear extension. **Reason: 1**

MA/11/1977/S - LAND REAR OF WOLVERLEY, VICARAGE ROAD, YALDING, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME18 6DT - Erection of detached dwelling and garage (height reduced from 7.020 to 6.680). **Reason: 9**

MA/11/2181/N - LAND ADJ TO 37, ASHFORD ROAD, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME14 5DB - Erection of 2No. semi-detached houses fronting Ashford Road and 2No. semi-detached bungalows fronting Huntsmans Lane with associated car parking and access. **Reason: 1**

MA/11/2191/N - FREMLIN WALK SHOPPING CENTRE, FREMLIN WALK, MAIDSTONE, KENT - Works to Fremlin Walk shopping area including two roofed areas, multimedia screen, signage, works to car park lobby, lighting and stencilled patterns to walls. **Reason: 1, 2, 6, 7**

MA/11/2194/N - LITTLE SQUERRYES, CHURCH ROAD, OTHAM, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME15 8SB - Erection of replacement garage/annexe building. **Reason: 1**

MA/11/2198/N - 28, ROSEACRE LANE, BEARSTED, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME14 4HZ - Erection of single storey extension. **Reason: 1**

MA/11/2204/S - BANK HOUSE, HIGH STREET, MARDEN, TONBRIDGE, KENT, TN12 9DS - Listed Building Consent for construction of a single storey rear extension, installation of conservation roof lights, installation of new flues to serve wood burning stove and boiler, internal alterations, removal of non-original chimney and ceiling in the dining room. **Reason: 3**

MA/11/2211/N - LEADING CROSS GREEN FARM, HEADCORN ROAD, LENHAM, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME17 2HS - Erection of a first floor side extension.alterations to roofs and replacement windows. **Reason: 1**

MA/11/2212/N - LEADING CROSS GREEN FARM, HEADCORN ROAD, LENHAM, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME17 2HS - An application for listed building consent for the erection of a first floor side extension. internal alterations, alterations to roofs, replacement windows, replace cement mortar with lime mortar and associated alterations. **Reason: 3**

MA/11/2214/S - PRIMROSE PADDOCK, STOCKETT LANE, EAST FARLEIGH, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME15 0QG - Variation of conditions 2 and 3 of appeal decision MA/04/2010 to allow the permission to include Mr Jimmy Draper (son of Mr & Mrs Draper). **Reason: 7**

MA/12/0011/N - MU MU NIGHTCLUB WINE BAR & RESTAURANT, 108, WEEK STREET, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME14 1RH - Application to vary condition 1 (No activity in connection with the use hereby permitted, other than the cleaning of the premises, shall be carried out outside of the hours of 0200 and 1000 hours Monday to Saturday and between the hours of 2300 and 1200 on Sundays, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays) of MA/07/1219 (Variation of condition 7 of planning permission reference MA/03/1062 (being change of use and alterations of stores to wine bar) to extend trading hours from midnight to 2 am) to read as follows: 'No activity in connection with the use hereby permitted, other than the cleaning of the premises and administrative duties, shall be carried out between the hours of 0400 and 1000 on any day'. **Reason: 1**

MA/12/0036/N - 28, ROSEACRE LANE, BEARSTED, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME14 4HZ - Listed building consent for the erection of a single storey extension. **Reason: 3**

Reasons for advertisement key:
1 - Applications affects the setting of a Listed Building.
2 - Application affects the setting of a Conservation Area.
3 - Application is for Listed Building Consent.
6 - Application is Major Development.
7 - Application affects a Public Right of Way.
9 - Application does not accord with the Local Plan.

MAIDSTONE Borough Council

Copies of applications listed may be seen at Maidstone Gateway, Maidstone during office hours (Monday to Wednesday 8.30am to 5.30pm, Thursday 8.30am to 7pm, Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm and Saturday 9am to 1pm). Any representations should be made in writing to me by no later than **5th February 2012**, quoting the application number.

Rob Jarman, Head of Development Management, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ. Dated: **22nd January 2012**

To place your notice here call the Kent Public Notice team on 01303 817044

Meet your perfect partner through your local trusted dating service

Call: 0800 032 9100 to place a free ad

Women Seeking

MARY likes most things, nights out, socialising, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383847**

SANDRA 63, likes cuddles, varied interests, WLTM male with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383497**

TRISHA teacher, blonde, attractive, uncomplicated, undemanding, non materialist well travelled, likes reading, walking, laughing, seeks tall, professional male, 60's for simple joys. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379891**

ANGELA Scottish female, dark hair, green eyes, attractive, new to the area, no ties, OHAC, seeks gentle male for good times and more. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382227**

DAWN young looking slim attractive fashionable 40's female, cultured and educated, discreet, WLTM genuine male for mutually convenient relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382223**

KATIE pretty slim blonde female, 35, N/S, likes pubs, countryside, meals out, seeking outgoing male for fun times, maybe relationship. Interested? ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382205**

CLARE petite dark haired attractive female with lots of interests, seeking male for mutual companionship. Must be respectful and discreet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382203**

LISA attractive dental nurse 25, been hurt in the past, looking for romantic male, 35-50yrs for loving friendship, maybe more. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382201**

SUSIE tactile 33yr old female who loves fast cars and motorbikes, seeks genuine male prepared to live life in the fast lane, 35-50yrs. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382163**

BLACK female, professional, African, 5ft 2ins, size 12, late 30's, hardworking, no ties, seeks man for serious relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389090**

FEMALE 42, African, understanding, seeks romantic, understanding, outgoing male, 45-50 for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383001**

MARY fun loving brunette, seeking friendship and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382689**

MAISY seeks male who likes dogs, country walks, beach, meals out and knows there own mind for a relationship and to build memories, fun loving lady 47. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383733**

CAROL alone on a Saturday night with a bag of chips, what am I doing? Sick of being single and looking for a male who can handle a good women. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383119**

SHARON 5ft 7ins, slim blonde, attractive, funny, good job, nice home, sports car, well educated/travelled, newly single and looking for love. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383113**

ERIN attractive petite divorcee with own home, looking for nights in/out, friendship and maybe more with mature male. Looks/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383111**

ALEX attractive professional, separated, no ties, OHAC, seeks similar romantic male for love, companionship and more. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383049**

SHARON 33, slim blonde, blue eyes outgoing, attractive, looking to put some much needed fun back into life, seeks male 30-45yrs. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383047**

LOOKING to start the New Year of with a bang? Faye open minded 20yr old female just looking for fun times. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383045**

FEMALE 58, 5ft 1ins, hazel eyes, cuddly, caring, likes animals, drink, good food, seeks likemindred male to share life with. Is that you? **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383669**

BLACK female, 35, GSOH, caring, loving, kind, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376611**

CLAIRE 38 blue eyes, blonde, voluptuous, curvy, looking for professional gent up to 50yrs LTR. Call me to meet up for a casual drink and chat. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380881**

FEMALE likes coast walks, shopping, gardening, countryside, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381463**

TIA 38yr old attractive blonde female, likes keep fit, home life, looking for similar genuine romantic for sensual relationship and good friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382081**

WENDY enjoys most things in life and is up for anything, whatever you fancy? I'm willing to give it a go! Call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382079**

MARIA 47, curly blonde hair, 5ft 6ins, size 14, GSOH, likes reading, walks, WLTM kind, friendly, fun loving gent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380509**

SUSAN 53, 5ft 3ins, slim, likes cinema, theatre, meals out, looking for male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380317**

GWEN lovely dark haired, dark blue eyed slim sensual female with GSOH, WLTM male 35-50 for fun dates and romantic nights in together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380443**

JACQUELINE 49, medium build, brown hair, likes animals, nights in/out, coastal walks, seeks male, 48-58 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381439**

JAYNE tall blonde, blue eyes, attractive, OHAC, no ties, enjoys nights out, romantic nights in, WLTM male up to 55yrs for fun times, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381365**

EMMIE 28yr old lonely single mum all out of love, looking for good company with male who can tame a confident beautiful sensual lady. Any looks. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381363**

LOVELY tall slim nurse, very caring and fun but missing that va-va-voom! Seeks adventurous male who's up for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 374159**

CHERYL young 54, attractive, petite, brunette, slim, likes most things, easygoing, looking for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380141**

MARIE solvent, independent, likes meals out, good things in life, GSOH, love pets/children, seeks honest, affectionate male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388574**

KATH 41 slim size 10, attractive and hardworking, likes cosy nights in/out, seeks cuddly romantic guy for tlc and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381339**

BERYL 57, likes fishing, home life, seeks gent, 60-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382503**

TALL slim, blonde, blue eyed voluptuous female, seeks older male, 70 plus for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382453**

SARAH 29yr old slim brunette with many interests seeks sincere male, 28-40yrs for fun times and more. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382161**

STEFF 32, slim, hazel eyes, long hair, curvy size 10, likes cosying up, cuddles, tickles, sick of being lonely and bored, not looking for complications just love. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382159**

ANN slim blonde female, lovely big blue eyes, great personality, outgoing, employed, OHAC, WLTM caring 40's male for adult fun and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382085**

DEBBIE dark haired passionate classy, discreet female looking for professional intelligent male wanting mutual companionship. Can accommodate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380441**

DEBORAH 38 missing that special someone in my life. Call me, even if you're not the one I guarantee we will still have loads of fun! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380439**

FEMALE 74, 5ft 1ins, artistic, versatile, seeks nice caring gent for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 378465**

LADY late 50's, new to area, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 378403**

WANNA spend Chrimbo with a big busty bimbo? Tracy separated and looking for Mr Fun! Come on you have to lose. Call me. Any age/looks. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380009**

SHIRLEY young looking tall attractive fit female, OHAC, open-minded, varied interests seeks tall male for genuine dates. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380005**

TANYA attractive, fit, slim, fun, all a hot blooded male wants! Now I have your attention, 37yr single female looking for the real deal. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381335**

CHRISTMAS special! Tia shy pretty female 39, seeks outgoing man to coax me out of my shell, for good times and old langsynes. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381333**

TARA 5ft big blue eyed babe with a cute smile looking for older sugar daddy who is not afraid to spend a little to live a lot! Good times always guaranteed. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381731**

JO bubbly, fun, red hair, green eyes, 5ft 5ins, likes nights out, dvds, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 374337**

LOOKING for a nice soul mate, dinners, drinks, walks, someone who enjoys life, I am optimistic, happy, fun, cuddly, slim, red hair, enjoy good food, working out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379865**

CARRIE 28yr old Christmas cracker, seeking easygoing confident character to pull me! ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380855**

SUE long blonde haired slim but curvy pretty female, loves to live life to the full, good wine, shopping, seeking genuine male 48-60yrs for adult friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380853**

I don't wanna be alone and unattached for another Xmas! Bev, attractive, big hearted, many interests, seeks male willing to take an interest in me! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376593**

KAZ 32yr old intellectual mixed race female, likes gym, meals in/out, seeks reliable, honest male, 38-58yrs to get to know for ltr. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376591**

NATALIE blonde blue eyed nurse, 39yrs medium build, no ties, life is good but I'm missing someone to love and lust after. Can you help? **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376589**

AUDREY recently widowed, seeks lonely gent for friendship and conversation. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381213**

ALICE 30's female, slim, lovely smile, not that happy at the moment but hoping you might change that, you've nothing to loose? Call me. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379201**

LISA sexy blonde 31yrs, extremely fit and outgoing, seeking male for casual friendship with benefits. Discretion assured. Any age/looks. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380879**

TRISH tall slim brunette, honest, reliable, affectionate, OHAC, no ties, outgoing, loves Indian food, seeking male 39-50yrs for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380877**

CAROL attractive lady of leisure, solvent, OHAC, WLTM sincere gent willing to entertain and share all of life's naughty indulgences with me. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380857**

TASHA 37, blonde tanned and very pretty, seeks well dressed older male with GSOH for fun meets, loving treats and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375605**

YOUNG free single female, seeks male for nights in/out, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388484**

LIDDY 28yr old genuine kind hearted girl looking for older male, 34-46yrs who can replace the other half of me that's missing. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375157**

ALICIA attractive petite female 22yrs, new to dating scene and area, loves nights in/out, WLTM male for adult fun. ACA. can accommodate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375135**

FOLKESTONE lady 57, likes animals, walks, drinks, good food, passionate, seeks likeminded male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375927**

45YR old female, 5ft 5ins, brown hair, cuddly, curvaceous, love animals, music, sports, seeks kind, caring, sincere, mature male, 40 plus with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381319**

RACHEL blonde brown eyed slim but feminine female, 32, likes wining/dining, theatre, WLTM reliable male for diner dates and romancing. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 377531**

CARMEL blonde brown eyed girl, employed with OHAC, likes meals out, walking, looking for loving relationship with caring down to earth male. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380001**

HANNAH 34 slim petite green eyed single mum with many interest, seeking discreet older male for mutual companionship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379977**

SAM 35, green eyed voluptuous, busty, loves football, theatre, travel, red wine, WLTM older male up to 65yrs for sensual relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379975**

MEL tall curvy attractive blonde, loves cosy nights in with a good bottle of wine, looking for some male attention and company. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379971**

NINA black beauty, classy 21, loves to have lots of fun, seeks older man who is willing to come up with a few new ideas for adult fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381361**

ANITA 58, 5ft 3ins, auburn hair, green eyes, likes swimming, bowling, shows, holidays, walks, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387416**

KATH slim, petite size 10, hardworking attractive, OHAC, seeking loving romantic guy to enjoy cosy nights in cuddling up with a dvd and glass of wine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381729**

JULIE late 70's, petite, widowed, seeks gent with car and GSOH who loves animals. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379277**

TANYA 28, beautiful black single mum, very body confident and all out of love. Lonely and looking for good company with experienced respectful man. Any age/looks. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381727**

HI genuine, fun to be with male? Nancy 39, attractive, discreet, lonely and in need of some much missed male attention. Call me **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381705**

IRENE looking for happy go lucky relationship with trustworthy male for romantic evenings in, quiet nights out, passionate weekends away and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381701**

KERRY 31 outgoing confident with laid back attitude, looking for relaxed relationship with tactile male, any age/looks/size or status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381697**

SUSIE seeking tall honest guy for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375883**

CHRIS new to area, late 50's, slim, 5ft 5ins, fair hair, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 378725**

FULL time vacancy arisen for open minded male seeking uncomplicated relationship with slim professional 39yr old female with wicked sense of humour. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 374157**

LYN 58, likes meals out, cinema, holidays, coast, theatre, shows, countryside, pubs, N/S, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376187**

PAT 70's, 5ft, cuddly, seeks male for friendship and days out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 369521**

JACKIE 48, 5ft 3ins, medium build, likes animals, nights in/out, walks, seeks male, 48-58 for friendship, maybe more, preferably a smoker. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 368039**

STUNNING blonde nurse, 32, funny and romantic, WLTM uncomplicated, reliable male, 50-65yrs for companionship and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 369221**

Men Seeking

MALE likes nights out, pubs, meals out, running, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 384317**

ATTRACTIVE professional male, 42, warm, sensitive, caring, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere, loving female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389354**

TOM average build, blue eyes, lots too offer, romance, passion, integrity, honest, likes socialising, keep fit, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 384223**

RICHARD 47, dark hair, blue eyes, slim-medium build, loving, caring, 5ft 6ins, likes holidays, theatre, music, wine, countryside, beach walks, seeks female, 35-63 for long term happy relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 384189**

LEE 33, dog owner, seeks likeminded female for fun, possible relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389346**

CHRIS 35, medium build, dark hair, blue eyes, seeks female, 21-40 for friendship and romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383965**

MALE 43, good looking, medium build, blue eyes, honest, caring, sensitive, GSOH, own home, seeks genuine female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383941**

MICK 57, N/S, likes walks, coast, countryside, medium build, 5ft 9ins, seeks lady, 50-65 for friendship, possible LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383775**

50YR old male, slim, 5ft 6ins, down to earth, GSOH, honest, likes music, country walks, pubs, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389206**

YOUNG male, 55, seeks attractive black girlfriend, N/S, likes country pubs, seaside, music, semi professional musician. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383151**

CHRIS 33, likes marathon running, nights out, cinema, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382959**

EASYGOING cheerful, decent man, 64, 6ft, 13st, blue eyes, educated, romantic, seeks nice, slim, elegant female, 47-57. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382933**

EARLY 40's male, handsome, strong, looking for fun times with likeminded female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389128**

MALE 44 likes meals out, cinema, seeks considerate, outgoing female of similar age for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389066**

STEVE designer, 5ft 10ins, good looking, seeking friendly lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382601**

IRVING 72, tactile, N/S, likes bowls, seeking attractive N/S female for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382567**

MICHAEL 58, retired, 6ft, many interests, fit, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382519**

DAVID light hearted positive 58yr old male, has high expectation of what he can offer a woman aged between 30-52. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383275**

48YR old male, born again Christian, seeks loving, faithful female for loving marriage. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383239**

FUN loving male, 49, good job, likes sport seeks female for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389170**

TONY good looking male, seeking female for fun times, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389166**

RICHARD 47, likes theatre, holidays, museums, travel, countryside, walks, looking for happy LTR with female, 36-63. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383173**

HAPPY go lucky divorced man, 48, 6ft, well built, seeks gorgeous female to share love and laughs with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383719**

LOVING genuine male, 41, seeks similar loving lady, 30-65 for loving relationship and future together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383715**

TV Sarah, tall, slim, long legs, seeks female who enjoys the company of a sexy, experienced TV. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383753**

Gay Seeking

JOHN 50, gay, non scene, looking to meet younger guy under 24 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389342**

MATURE male, seeks male, any age for occasional meetings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 384071**

STEVEN GSOH, seeks gay male, 50-65 for friendship, possible LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383791**

IAN 42, inexperienced bisexual, seeks male for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 367941**

53YR old bi male, 5ft 11ins, slim, seeks gay/bi male, experienced, up to 65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 367829**

42YR old bi curious guy seeks gay/bi/TV for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383183**

25YR old good looking, straight acting CD, seeks older, discerning gent for fun and games. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383023**

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HIS EYE ON YOU

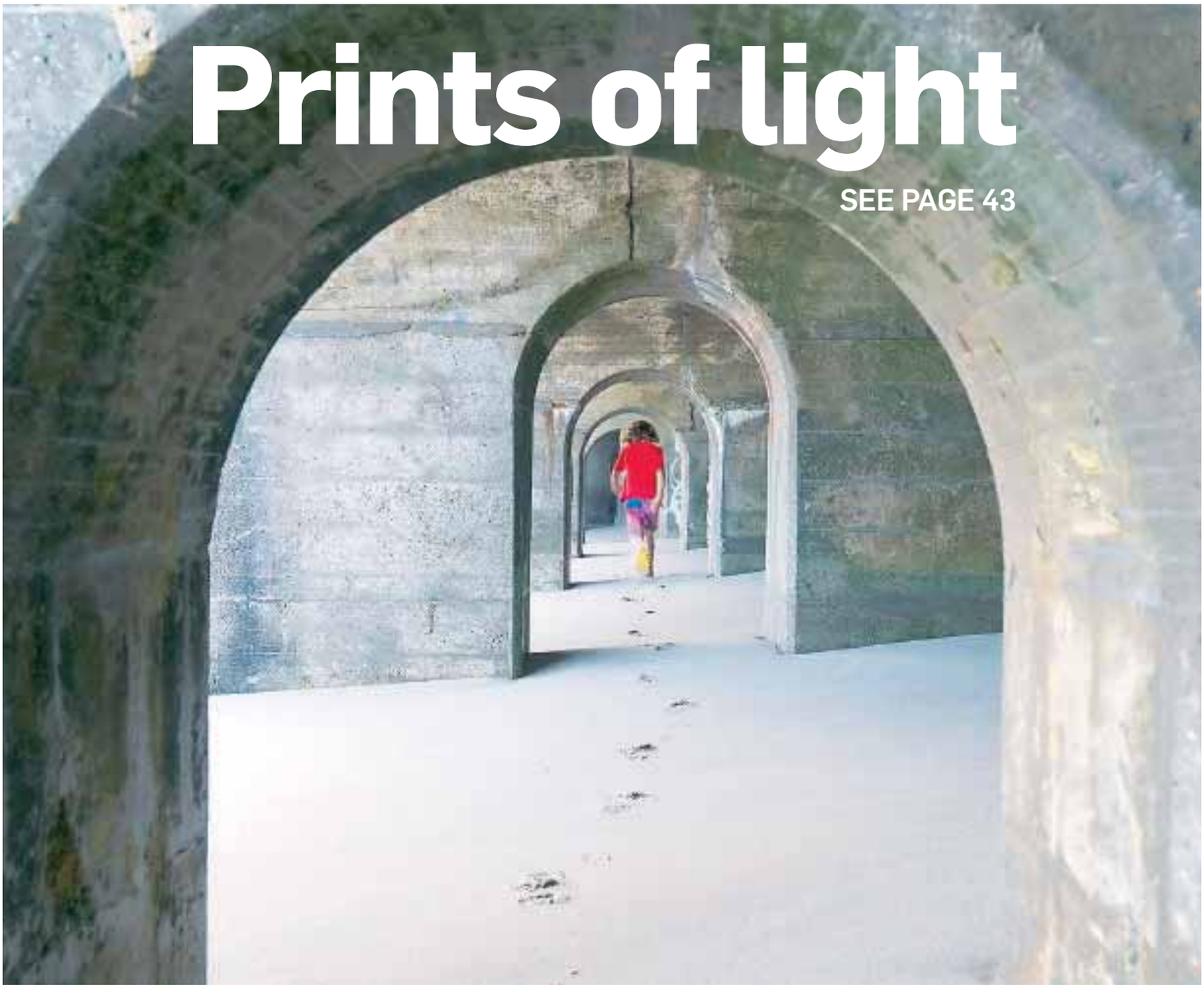
Chris Packham shares his love of all things natural

SEE PAGE 46

Paul Merton: is the man finally out of his head?

SEE PAGE 48

Kent Weekend



Prints of light

SEE PAGE 43

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THE INTERVIEW

Brigitte Orasinski

A Kent town far away

The exotic is often a lot closer than you think, discovers **Nick Ames**

A LEGACY of the Folkestone Triennial arts festival exploring some of the legends, anecdotes, mysteries and characters of the town and its surrounding area is currently the best-seller in the local branch of Waterstones.

Artistic and cultural group Strange Cargo is behind Everywhere Means Something To Someone: The People's Guidebook To Folkestone, which explores some of the lesser-known facets of the town.

The book's creators hope it will build on Folkestone's growing reputation as a centre for the arts as events such as the Triennial and book festival attract more visitors.

It contains details of John Logie Baird and the birth of television, prehistoric holy wells, forgotten tram tracks, military memories, ghosts, film stars and even recipes, as well as well-known landmarks such as the harbour and visitor attractions like the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway.

Brigitte Orasinski is artistic director of Strange Cargo. She said: "The theme of the Folkestone Triennial last year was A Million Miles From Home, but we are at home.

"We are based in Folkestone, so we wanted to celebrate our town and its people."

The book, which was put together with contributions from many residents, features 260 stories with images.

It features text in Nepalese as well as English to enable members of the Gurkha community to gain a greater understanding of a town that has fully adopted them and their culture.

Plaques have been put up at 200 of the featured locations.

"The idea was to get beneath the skin of Folkestone," said Orasinski. "Visitors to the town usually just scratch the surface, especially if they only come for a day.

"The book is like being shown around Folkestone by a friend with a great deal of knowledge about its history, traditions and people. There is something featured which will appeal to all age ranges and interests.

"Obviously, places such as The Leas, the coastal park and the harbour are featured, but there are also bus routes and poems. Someone who searches out the sites will find themselves in unusual parts of the town, off the more usually trodden paths. So they can also make discoveries for themselves."

Among the unusual stories recounted are details of old walled gardens that can just be recognised amid the brambles beyond the East Cliff. The original buildings were reduced to rubble by either wartime bombing or a cliff fall and are now home to a scarce species of lizard.

SHARED STORIES: Brigitte Orasinski wants people to take note of the fascinating places nearby and their tales, such as the Holy Well

The holiday residence of Queen Victoria, the Royal Pavilion Hotel, which can be found behind the Burstin, is also featured, as are strange ship-shaped objects on the seashore and the remains of trenches used to train soldiers heading for France in the First World War.

A poignant reminder of an air raid in the same conflict is also detailed as a plaque tells of May 25, 1917, when on a busy bank-holiday weekend German Gotha aircraft dropped bombs on the street, killing 60 people instantly, with many others dying later from their injuries. Land once occupied by the devastated shop buildings in Tontine Street has never been built on since, in memorial to those who died.

Then there is the bus shelter in Seabrook that was used as a location for shots of Michael Caine in the 2007 psychological thriller Is Anybody There? and memories of seaside adventures underneath the arches that run along the sands.

Orasinski said: "I have many favourite stories I encountered in working on this project. One was of a man now in his 70s who worked on the sea defences around the Mermaid café. He cemented a farthing into the concrete, but it later fell out. However, you can still see the circle it made. The stories are a unique way to tap into other people's memories.

"As a contrast, there are details from the James Bond film A View To A Kill, which had a scene shot on the Warren, involving Grace Jones's character May Day, a bomb and a plot to blow up Silicon Valley."

Writer and broadcaster Dea Birkett, who used to live in Folkestone, introduces the book and includes her personal memories of the town.

She states: "At last – a book about real travelling. Going on a journey isn't about clocking up the miles, but adopting a state of mind. It's about looking very, very carefully. That is what this wonderful collection of moments forces you to do – see Folkestone afresh.

"Travel is always as much about another time as another place, and it's startling how many of the contributions are about memories of what was there, rather than records of what is. We all long to time-travel – back to our youth, in our grandfather's footsteps, or simply to a place we believe was better than today. This book takes you to that magical lost land, reminding us of what once was.

"When I now give talks about travel-writing around the country, I ask the audience if they've ever been to India. Often half the well-travelled crowd raise their hands. Then I ask how many have been to Folkestone. Sometimes, someone has. I do this to prove that places that appear most ordinary are sometimes the least known.

"Folkestone, for most people, is a more far-away place than Goa."

■ **Everywhere Means Something To Someone: The People's Guidebook To Folkestone is priced at £5 and available from Waterstone's in Folkestone or the Strange Cargo office in the high street.**

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ARCHANT KOS MEDIA

NEW YEAR

Don't run from resolutions

THE fat lady has well and truly sung her last note, the turkey sandwiches are just a distant memory and New Year's Eve was a wash-out... just like most years.

We are already three weeks into those brand-new desk calendars that give us a shiny new phrase for the day. Tomorrow, perhaps it should say 'Don't Quit!'.

It is almost a certainty that the majority of those of us who actually believe in making a New Year's Resolution or three have already cast them aside like the cream corduroy trousers your nan gave you on that disappointing day in December.

Whether it is the idea of going for a run every day after work only to be confronted with hail and freezing temperatures or the never-ending last packet of cigarettes, our resolutions usually start to wane about now.

But don't let it happen! Forgo that last celebration in the box... leave it for the youngsters and their over-capable metabolism.

Pull on those trainers and accept that you will get wet if you leave the house for a jog.

Take more notice of the healthy food in the supermarket and the eat-yourself-thin articles – there are certainly enough of them out there for every living being.

Banishing the booze, the cigarettes, the pork scratchings, along with the cutting back on all those other guilty pleasures... it will come with time, don't worry.

The most important thing is to know in your own mind that you want to make a change to your lifestyle because at the end of the day it is your choice, your decision. Stick by that and you won't go far wrong.

And if that fails, well, there's always tomorrow to start all over again.

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ADVERTISERS ANNOUNCEMENT

Why New Year resolutions are so hard to keep

Why is it that every New Year we start off with such good intentions, only to find they have melted away before the end of January?

The reason, according to Gravesend Hypnotherapist, Rob Woodgate, is simple - we just don't feel like changing.

"Many people have an inner conflict between their thoughts and feelings, especially when it comes to New Year resolutions", says Rob. "For example, you might resolve to lose weight but find it difficult feel excited about exercise. The problem is that the feeling part of us is much stronger than the thinking part, so we'll always end up doing what we feel like doing."

Hypnotherapy allows you to resolve these inner conflicts - to stop that 'Angel and Devil' fighting - so that it becomes so much easier to achieve your goals.

For information on how hypnotherapy can help you make your New Year resolutions work this time, please visit North Kent Hypnotherapy at www.northkenthypnotherapy.com or call Rob Woodgate on 01474 740724.

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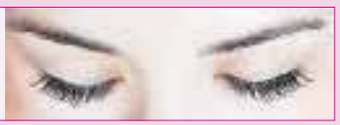

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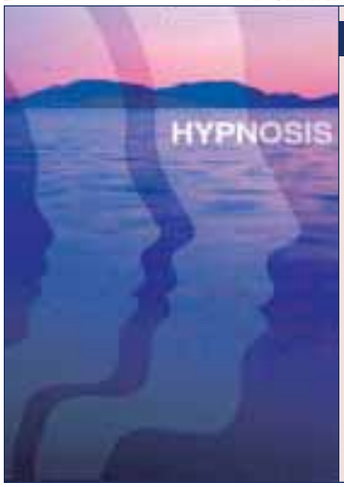

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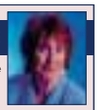

Belmont Hypnotherapy was founded in 1981 where it has established itself as an internationally accredited Institute and Centre for Teaching in the fascinating fields of Hypnotherapy, Psychotherapy and Neuro-Linguistics Programming.

Jean who owns this company has 32 years experience where she can help your mind body and spirit through use of hypnotherapy. There are two emotions that rule your life; love and fear, hypnotherapy helps to balance these emotions which help you overcome any psychometric problems such as phobias, compulsions, addictions and anxiety etc.

Jean is also an International Clairvoyant and Holistic Healer, where she is in much demand and travels around the world, In fact Jean has just got back from Japan after working for a month teaching. To find out more on this please visit http://www.belmont-centre.co.uk/clairvoyance.htm

So if this Year you want to overcome any fears or addictions with the help of hypnotherapy or find out more about yourself with the use of clairvoyancy then contact Jean at the Belmont Centre **01843 587929** or visit **www.belmont-centre.co.uk**

To be included on this page, please email **features@kosmedia.co.uk**

No bull from last-minute choice, just good food at an affordable price...

RESTAURANT REVIEW

EVEN in January, with everyone recovering from the Christmas spending spree, it's not an easy thing to find a last-minute place to eat on a Saturday night. So, after failing with a few town-centre restaurants, I visited a haunt with which I'm more familiar on Sunday lunchtimes – The Bull on Penenden Heath.

A large pub on the outskirts of Maidstone, the venue has all the charm of a local with none of the awkwardness of feeling like you've intruded on a private gathering.

The menu is traditional pub fare, with lots of burgers and other favourites, so it felt only right that I go for prawn cocktail (£3.95) to start.

Expecting the usual paltry lettuce leaf and tiny shrimps, I was pleased to be given large juicy prawns, draped in just the right amount of sauce and accompanied by a decent side salad and soft, seeded bread.

Add a few potatoes and this large serving could easily have become a main course.

My guest's starter of Old Speckled Hen rarebit-stuffed mushroom (£3.75) was significantly smaller in comparison, but the delicious flavour of the ale-infused rarebit ensured she was as satisfied as me.

For the main I had the misfortune to choose

the one dish that happened to be off the menu – pan-fried salmon – so I made a snap choice to go for sweet potato, apricot, chickpea and red-pepper kebabs with couscous, flatbread, cucumber and yoghurt (£7.75).

There was nothing particularly exciting about it, but for a vaguely healthy alternative to pub grub it was a good meal.

Unfortunately, however, having tried a mouthful of my guest's hand-battered halloumi (£7.45), I realised I'd made the wrong choice.

Served with chunky chips and a colourful side salad, this was so delightful a dish that my guest had cleared her plate before I was able to steal another bite...

We shared dessert – a pub pudding board that at £6.75 was twice the price of the other options, but we knew we had hit the jackpot when three full-sized desserts arrived, complete with a choice of custard, cream or ice-cream.

We started with the dark chocolate and walnut brownie with chocolate sauce, which I soon claimed as my own. This large serving was simply heaven for chocolate-lovers.

In contrast, the white chocolate and pistachio cheesecake was barely touched, leaving us to move on to the sticky toffee and date pudding, which we devoured in minutes.

It may not be a Saturday-night dining venue, but I'd have no problem returning to The Bull the next time I don't feel like cooking... especially when you throw in a few drinks and discover that, thanks to some handy money-saving offers, the bill for a three-course meal comes to a mere £37.60.

Gastro pub it's not, but sometimes all you need is good simple food that's close to home.

Erica Jones

■ **The Bull**
Boxley Road, Penenden Heath, Maidstone ME14 2DH
Telephone: 01622 752888

FARMERS' MARKETS

WHITFIELD: Whitfield farmers' market is held every Thursday from 9am to noon in the village hall. This busy market offers fresh fish, scallops, crabs and lobsters. Local farmers' vegetables and fruit are on sale, as are eggs from a nearby RSPCA Freedom Farm.

STANSTED: Held in the village hall on the first Thursday of every month, this was conceived as an alternative to opening a village shop. The market includes, meats, vegetables, soft fruits, cheeses, bread, cakes, hand-made chocolates and jams.

ROLVENDEN: Established in 2000, Rolvenden farmers' market is run entirely by volunteers and is non-profit making. It takes place every Thursday morning from 10am to noon in the new village hall and St Mary's Church opposite. There are normally 20-30 stalls with a selection of produce and crafts.

BROMLEY: Situated in the busy pedestrian area of Bromley high street between the Churchill Theatre and Elmfield Road, this popular market is combined with an arts and craft market and is open every Friday and Saturday from 9am to 5pm.

CHALLOCK: Challock farmers' market is open from 1pm to 4pm on the first and third Fridays of every month and offers a selection of locally-produced fruit and vegetables, eggs, cheese, fresh meat, fish, game, bread, pies, honey, jams and pickles. One stall is also devoted to selling village gardeners' produce.

WYE: Wye farmers' market has been providing its local community with delicious, locally-produced food for more than 10 years. An enviable array of stalls sells everything from fresh bread, cakes, jams and chutneys to locally-produced organic meats, fresh fish and locally-made cheeses.

■ **For more information on farmers' markets around the county, visit www.farmersmarkets.org.uk**

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KENT ATTRACTIONS

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The really wild picture show

Chris Packham

The Gulbenkian, Canterbury
Monday, February 13, 7.45pm
www.kent.ac.uk/gulbenkian

RENOWNED wildlife TV presenter Chris Packham is heading to The Gulbenkian theatre in Canterbury next month.
The Springwatch star will treat audiences to his latest collection of intimate images of UK wildlife.
Having started out as a children's-show presenter on The Really Wild Show, Packham will put together a performance suitable for all the family.
The impassioned naturalist has also become a creative photographer and captures perfect moments of raw emotion, beauty and perfection from the wild.
Tickets are priced at £16, with a family-and-friends ticket for four costing £60.

Story of rock and rebellion

Rite of passage

The Avenue Theatre, Sittingbourne
Tue to Sat, February 14-18
01795 471140

SPRING Awakening is a musical that explores the journey from adolescence to adulthood with passion and good tunes.
The new production, which has already won eight Tony Awards, tells a story of morality, sexuality and rock'n'roll and has been exhilarating audiences across the UK.
You can join this group of late 19th-century German students on their passage as they navigate teenage self-discovery and coming-of-age anxiety in a celebration of youth and rebellion.
Tickets cost £11 for adults and £8 for concessions and under-16s; visit www.avenuetheatre.co.uk. The show has swearing, but there is no age restriction.

Incentive for Towns arts

Spark into life

Fuse Festival, Medway
Enter by Monday, January 23
www.fusefestival.org
fuse@medway.gov.uk

WORK is already under way for the Fuse Medway Festival, which provides an opportunity for local artists to develop their work in public view.
Fuse, which takes place in June, is announcing three new 'Spark' commissions for the 2012 festival for home-grown outdoor performers.
The Spark initiative is open to new or established groups or individuals from Medway and will offer one commission of up to £5,000 and two others worth up to £2,500.
Applicants to take part are welcome from any art form, but they must be based in Medway and their work must be designed for the outdoors.
Artists should write to Fuse Medway Festival, The Brook Theatre, Old Town Hall, Chatham, Kent ME4 4SE or email fuse@medway.gov.uk by Monday, January 23.

Zippo leaves big top

Circus moves indoors

Woodville Halls Theatre, Gravesend
Monday to Sunday, February 13-20
01474 337774
www.gravesham.gov.uk

ZIPPO'S Circus will make a unique appearance away from the big top when it entertains at Gravesend's Woodville Halls Theatre.
The production has been specially created for the theatre, bringing acrobats, aerialists, jugglers and clowns to an intimate setting.
The new show includes Tweedy the Clown, who left his home in Hampshire three years ago to star in the highly-rated Ringling Bros, Barnum & Bailey Circus in America.
Now back on British soil, Tweedy will delight children with his clever comedy.
The circus features international illusionist Guy Barrett with his mystifying routines that have been performed across the globe.

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The Darkest Hour 3D (12A)
The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (18)
The Iron Lady (12A)
The Sitter (15)
Underworld: Awakening 3D (18)
Warhorse (12A)
ODEON KIDS - Rio 2D (U)
SENIOR SCREEN - Contagion (12A)
NEWBIES - The Iron Lady (12A)
OTHER CINEMA - Anonymous (12A)

For times and films, please call the film line on 0871 22 44 007 or visit www.odeon.co.uk

For all Dickens World information and online bookings, go to www.dickensworld.co.uk or call 01634 890421

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EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

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The hunter returns
Reginald D is back!

Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells
Friday, February 24, at 8pm
01892 530613
www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk

FOLLOWING his sell-out performances in October, Reginald D Hunter has extended the tour of his show, Sometimes Even The Devil Tells The Truth.
Heading to the Assembly Hall Theatre in February, Hunter has become one of the UK comedy industry's best-known and most distinctive performers.
Hunter has appeared on several top panel shows, including Have I Got News For You and Mock The Week, grabbing high praise for his appearances.
His stand-up is based on being brutally honest, frequently controversial but meticulously measured and thought out. Tickets cost £20.

Let's move to a bright beat
Mix of sound

Memorial Theatre, Broadstairs
Sunday, January 22, at 7pm
0845 262 6263

BRIGHTEN up the winter gloom with a high-energy, anything-goes musical evening with the London Philharmonic Skiffle Orchestra.
This unique group performs colourful Celtic, Cajun, klezmer, Cossack, country blues and comedy live on stage with a wealth of unfamiliar instruments, costume changes and numerous props.
The team is full of surprises and has delighted audiences in Britain as well as across Europe with its unique take on musical entertainment.
Tickets are priced at £10.50 for members and £12.50 for non-members of the Sarah Thorne Theatre Club; email info@sarahthorne-theatreclub.co.uk for more information.

Room 101 host out of his head
Paul Merton

Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells
Monday, April 30, at 8pm
01892 530 613

HAVE I Got News For You host Paul Merton has announced a UK tour for 2012 that includes a stop at the Assembly Hall Theatre.
The new show, entitled Out Of My Head, will have the Room 101 presenter musing on the bizarre workings of his own brain.
Well known for his political satire and often controversial points of view, Merton will undoubtedly make the night one to remember.
The Just A Minute performer will be joined on tour by Lee Simpson, Richard Vranch and Suki Webster for a night of sketches, music and variety.
Tickets are on sale now from the box office on 01892 530613 or online at www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.

Indie gig could set the trend
Pilot event

Britannia Theatre, Chatham
Friday, January 27, at 9.30pm
07544 835578
www.dickensworld.co.uk

MUSIC fans in Medway will be delighted to hear about the launch of Indie nights at The Britannia Theatre in Chatham's Dickens World.
Production company Showco, which created the famous Donnington Monsters Of Rock festival, has set up the night with a view to making it a regular slot.
The company has experience of sound-producing for bands such as Aerosmith, Black Sabbath, Motley Crue and The Who during their world tours, so the night should rock.
Acts appearing on the night will be Indie bands The Slydigs and The Craven Braves, with support from DJs Ed Wilder with Bonnie & Carly, who will take the music into the night.
Tickets to the show are priced at just £5. Visit www.dickensworld.co.uk for more information.

HOMES

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Last chance to save before stamp-duty holiday ends

By Nick Ames
nick.ames@archant.co.uk

TIME is running out for first-time homebuyers to take advantage of the Government's stamp-duty holiday, but Kent housebuilder Bovis Homes is offering to help them beat the deadline.

First-time buyers have been exempt from paying stamp duty on properties priced between £125,000-£250,000 since the budget of 2010, but this will finish after Saturday, March 24.

From then, anyone who takes ownership (*ie* legally completes) on these homes will have to pay 1 per cent of the purchase price in stamp duty tax.

Bovis Homes says it has quality properties available in this price range at Chestnut Place in Ashford, Abbey Place in Minster and Meadowbank at Great Easthall Farm in Sittingbourne.

"The holiday is almost over – but there could still be time for homebuyers to make the most of it if they buy a brand-new Bovis Home," said group marketing director Kevin Wilkins.

"That 1 per cent could be a significant extra cost for the buyer – up to £2,500 in some cases – so there is a real saving to be made by completing your house purchase before the deadline.

"However, the danger is that first-time buyers may fail to appreciate how long the homebuying process could take and they may leave it too late in the new year to make the most of this benefit.

"The advantage of buying new is the buyer has a far greater chance of making the deadline and achieving the stamp-duty saving.

DREAM START: Buying new could save you cash

"You will avoid getting stuck in a dreaded chain, which can always cause unexpected delays, and the buyer will be kept informed about the timescales involved in buying their home.

"With our selection of low-deposit purchase-assistance schemes, the first-time buyer could be freed up to make their move quickly, without having to wait to save up for a large deposit."

Those assistance schemes include FirstBuy – a scheme where a joint 20 per cent equity loan from the Government and Bovis Homes means the buyer requires just a 5 per cent deposit and a 75 per cent loan-to-value mortgage.

Empty homes answer to problem of squatters?

OVER the last 18 months, Landlord Action, leader in helping landlords with problem tenants, has been instructed on a growing number of squatting cases fuelled by the huge proportion of properties sitting empty across the UK.

After the broadcast of Channel 4's The Great British Property Scandal highlighting the gravity of this problem, Paul Shamplina, founder of Landlord Action, supports the challenge to get more empty properties back into use as he believes this will reduce the number of squatters taking up residence in private properties, which has a detrimental effect on homeowners and landlords.

According to Channel 4, 88 per cent of these empty properties are privately owned.

Shamplina said: "Many people don't have the funds to bring these properties back into use and it can cause huge aggravation, expense and stress for owners if squatters take up residence.

"To reduce this, councils need to do more by forming stronger links with private landlords to tackle the empty-homes crisis by creating viable alternatives so fewer people need to squat."

Aside from a few organised gangs who target properties to squat, the main reason that properties are squatted is because the majority engaging in it cannot afford rent.

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- Ceed is ready to cause a stir with Geneva debut
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Driving

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IN STYLE: The new Kia Optima boasts a 'must have' quality that's sure to draw in the buyers

Kia's optimum expectations

By Sam Davison
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

KIA'S newly-arrived Optima is well-named.

The Korean carmaker isn't always right on naming – I won't bore you with the acronym behind Ceed, Kia's Ford Focus rival – but there's no misplaced optimism here.

It's the first Kia to take the No1 sales spot at home and the brand has struggled to meet US demand – even with a production plant there.

Which explains why the Optima is late here and there are just 1,600 cars to sell in year one.

And these would sell on looks alone, though priced from £19,595 and carrying Kia's unique seven-year/100,000-mile warranty.

Kia says the Optima shows a shift from selling on value and rationality to selling on design, also highlighted by the latest Sportage SUV and Rio supermini.

It means Kia has achieved something fellow value brand Skoda took far longer to do: caused buyers to look beyond the badge.

The catalyst has been former Audi design wizard Peter Schreyer – the man behind the original TT. He has demanded that Kias need a 'must have' quality that the Optima has in spades, with muscular yet swooping lines and a coupe roofline that make it look good from any angle.

It also walks the talk on-road with good cornering and nimbleness for a relatively big car, without the hard ride that this can bring as a necessary evil.

But design doesn't always count in the hard fought 'D' or Mondeo sector though, where corporate users dominate, so the Optima needs old-style Kia rationality too.

For now, it will sell only with the 134bhp 1.7-litre diesel engine already used in the impressive Sportage, available with six-speed manual or auto gearboxes.

The manual's low emissions and average fuel consumption close to 60mpg will tempt company drivers, while fleet managers will note that it can be disposed of after three years with lots of warranty and, hopefully, mileage left.

Day to day the Optima should be as cosseting as models costing far more, since Kia hasn't lost sight of its value roots: standard spec is too lengthy to list here, but interior quality, an attractive well-arranged dashboard, and a superb 12-speaker Infinity brand Harman stereo stand out – the latter benefiting from the capacious cabin as much as any inmates. Oh, and there's a huge boot, too.

MINI ROAD TEST — KIA OPTIMA

Price: from £29,595-£25,995
Driving appeal: ★★★★
Image: ★★★★
Space: ★★★★★
Value: ★★★★★
Running costs: ★★★★
Reliability: ★★★★★
How green?: ★★★★
Best rival: Vauxhall Insignia

City car three sisters head for makeover

THREE'S no crowd when they get on as well as the Toyota Aygo, Peugeot 107 and Citroën C1.

The three city car clones – from an original design by Toyota – have been a big success story for the Japanese marque and its two French partners, generating much affection from owners since launch in 2005.

They set a new benchmark for style and practicaility within a small on-road footprint, even offering three- or five-door formats, and have since gained an enviable reputation for a robustness that belies their compact dimensions.

However, with the small-car segment booming as motoring costs soar and low fuel consumption and emissions become crucial, there is plenty of competition, notably from VW's own three-part harmony group: its own Up! model plus the Skoda Citigo and Seat Mii, all arriving over the next few months.

First to hit back will be the Peugeot 107, arriving in February, with the revised Aygo in March and the C1 due in April.

Needless to say, while all will have had an individual cosmetic makeover inside and out, the big message is the same – tweaking of the standard-fit award-winning three-cylinder 67bhp 1.0-litre petrol engine means it is now exempt from road tax and the mpg can average in the mid-60s.

Look out, too, though, for enhanced interior quality plus gadget connectivity to please hardcore younger buyers who have taken to all three cars, not least because they are actually entertaining to drive despite their modest power.

Pricing has yet to be announced but, in the current UK market squeeze and with faltering consumer confidence, don't expect any of the three brands to stray much above their current £8,600 entry price.

UPDATE: The revised Toyota Aygo will arrive in March

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Fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Kia Optima range are: Urban 35.8 (7.9) – 49.6 (5.7), Extra Urban 57.6 (4.9) – 64.2 (4.4), Combined 47.1 (6.0) – 57.6 (4.9). CO2 emissions are 158 – 128 g/km
7 year / 100,000 mile manufacturer's warranty. See your local dealer or visit www.kia.co.uk for full warranty terms and exclusions. Price correct at time of going to press and specification is subject to change without notice. Kia Optima range from £19,595 to £25,995 On The Road (OTR). Model shown is 1.7 CRDi Optima '3' @ £24,495 OTR. Metallic/mica paint is available at an additional £475 charge. OTR price includes VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months' Government Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) and Vehicle First Registration Fee.

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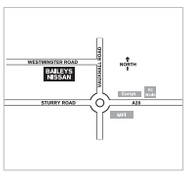

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There's no 'S Copa' from the charms of the Ibiza

By Sam Davison
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THERE could hardly be a better name for a Seat designed to appeal to the sporty Spanish marque's youngest buyers.

It's the Ibiza, after the island that stands for full-on holidays, clubbing and generally having a great time.

And with the current fourth generation Ibiza, Seat really hit the spot – the car has sharp styling, handling and pricing, plus practicality thrown in.

It's midway through its life now, having arrived in 2008, and a facelift version is due this spring, but the essence of its appeal will remain.

For a start, it's a capacious supermini, another of the 'supersize' generation that also spawned the latest Vauxhall Corsa, Peugeot 207 and Renault Clio models and leaving room for a future city car contender to slot in below it – the new Seat Mii baby car arrives later this year. While that will be an impressive lesson in space-efficiency it will make its big brother look positively enormous inside.

That upsized Ibiza cabin was a real winner when it arrived and also added a capacious boot, but if you needed yet more capacity, a swish ST or estate version was added to the range recently, priced from £14,260.

The hatchback line-up starts at just £9,995 though with the three-door SC. Like many carmakers, Seat turned the old stigma of the cheap and cheerful three-door model on its head and created a slightly different profile that makes it resemble an upmarket coupe version – without the extra price tag. But the smart money goes for the style with practicality of the five-door tested here in its cheapest guise, the 1.2-litre petrol powered S Copa.

To be fair, this engine might get you into the Ibiza style, but it doesn't have the club beat you would welcome. Like many three-cylinder units it has an uneven tempo; the 70PS (68bhp) motor has been in the portfolio of Seat parent and German giant VW for some while and can be rowdy under pressure.

On the other hand, emissions are not terrible – you'll escape road tax altogether in year one and pay £95 a year thereafter – and it should average in the late 40s for mpg.

But acceleration is sluggish and you might consider two livelier four-cylinder petrol alternatives: there's an 85PS (83bhp) 1.4-litre or 105PS (103bhp) 1.2-litre turbocharged.

Then there are just as many diesels to choose from: including a 75PS (73bhp) 1.2-litre model wearing Seat's green Ecomotive label, and priced from £14,200. It will save you paying road tax and could average a starship 80mpg with careful driving.

But the same engine can be had for £13,550 without all the eco trickery and, frankly, if you don't cover huge mileages then why pay more?

The rest of the diesel card is filled by a 105PS (103bhp) 1.6-litre and 143PS (141bhp) 2.0-litre – the latter would appear to be overkill.

Seat has upgraded the standard Ibiza spec considerably of late, so our S Copa gets alloys, air con, electric front window and mirrors and other goodies with some affordable and tempting upgrades.

One of these is £300 for the electronic stability control, although you might wonder whether you need it since the Ibiza is such a sure-footed car, helped by a relatively long wheelbase and wide stance. That is the secret of the car's roominess, though the interior design still needs a spark to match the exterior lines.

It feels more robust than the previous generation though and maybe the forthcoming revamp will funk it up.

SEAT IBIZA S COPA 1.2 5-DR: PRICE £11,635

STYLISH: The Seat Ibiza is due for a revamp but you can't go far wrong with the current stylings of this car, with handling, pricing and the all-important look ticking the right boxes

FACT FILE

Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Reliabilty:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
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Best rival:	Ford Fiesta

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First GEAR

MOTORING NEWS

Toyota Yaris goes hybrid

TOYOTA has given a sneak preview of its new Yaris Hybrid supermini ahead of official unveiling at the Geneva Motor Show in March, before arriving in UK showrooms this summer.

It features a downsized petrol-electric hybrid system seen in the brand's Prius and Auris that still delivers a healthy 98bhp with both powerplants fully engaged.

New 'Ceeding' from cool Kia

TALKING of Geneva – Kia's all-new Ceed will make its debut at that show too, before going on sale here in June.

The current Ceed sparked the Korean marque's rise up the motor rankings, being both a confident and well-made tilt at Western models like the VW Golf and Ford Focus as well as introducing Kia's unique seven-year/100,000-mile warranty.

SUV Mokka surprise

VAUXHALL has caught some industry watchers by surprise by unveiling an all-new small SUV to be called the Mokka.

The compact yet chunky eye-catcher should arrive before the end of the year, offering 4x4 or front-wheel drive, but all with economical stop/start. It can also be fitted with Vauxhall's integrated rear bumper bike carrier.

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2009/09 PLATE AUDI A3 1.6 SE 5 DOOR HATCHBACK

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2008/08 PLATE VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6T DESIGN 3 DOOR

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2010/60 PLATE AUDI A4 S LINE 2.0 TDI 143BHP 4 DOOR SOLD

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2003/03 PLATE PEUGEOT 206CC 2.0 SE CONVERTIBLE

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2007/57 PLATE PEUGEOT 207 1.4 S 5 DOOR

in metallic twilight blue with contrasting black and grey cloth interior-climate control-alloy wheels-electric heated door mirrors-remote control central locking-multiple air bag protection system-electric windows-front center arm rest-driver and passenger seat height adjustment-CD in car entertainment system-multifunction steering wheel-this car offers great fuel economy with low cost tax and insurance groups sensibly priced at only **£4,995**

2006/06 FORD MONDEO 2.0 TDCI EDGE 5 DOOR SOLD

in metallic moonstone silver with contrasting black cloth interior-air conditioning-electric windows-rear parking sensors-remote control central locking-alloy wheels-alloy wheels-c/d in-car entertainment system-leather armrest-multiple airbag protection system-electric adjustable door mirrors-front fog lights-electric drivers seat height adjustment-this car has great fuel economy and would make a good family car **£3,995**

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Alfa stepping up the pace as sales soar

By Sam Davison
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

SPORTY Italian carmaker Alfa Romeo's share of the UK car market soared by almost 31 per cent in 2011.

The Fiat subsidiary also recorded its highest level of new-car registrations in Britain (11,563) since 2002.

This success was against a backdrop last year when motor manufacturers averaged a 4.4 per cent drop in market share.

But while the headline figures are clear-cut, Alfa says a whole range of factors played a part, including a much-improved and desirable product line-up, the brand's improved dealer network – which landed a top-10 positioning in the demanding JD Power UK customer satisfaction survey – and highly-competitive finance and incentives.

We can't argue that the compact three-door Alfa MiTo supermini (pictured) and stylish Alfa Giulietta five-door hatchback have attracted new customers, who see them as credible alternatives to mainstream German rivals.

They are also technically impressive with good powertrains, including the brand's powerful yet economical MultiAir engine technology, five-star maximum EuroNCAP safety ratings and Alfa Romeo's unique DNA driving system, which enables the driver to quickly select the best handling and engine format to suit conditions.

Alfa Romeo UK brand spokesman Damien Dally said: "We have two leading products on offer and have been able to win back customers who may have shied away from the brand in the past.

"However, it's not only the product that needs to be right. That's why we've worked tirelessly to improve our dealer network.

"In addition, both Giulietta and MiTo are available on competitive low finance rates, along with a free inclusive Alfa care package which includes three years' complimentary servicing.

"With the Alfa 4C [lightweight sports coupé] due next year, Alfa Romeo's future looks bright."

Bargain time as Skoda cuts VAT

SKODA is out to put January's high-street sales in the shade with a series of offers running until Saturday, March 31.

The first is an extension to the very successful no VAT or, cutting to the chase, 20 per cent off the list price.

The deal extends to selected petrol and diesel versions of the Fabia supermini, Octavia family car and Superb executive models (pictured) in both hatch and estate body styles. Some Roomster mini-MPV variants are also included.

Buyers can spread the cost of their new car over two years as well without paying a penny more, though this zero per cent finance deal applies only to certain models and is subject to a 50 per cent deposit.

Alternatively, buyers opting for Skoda's 7.9 per cent APR finance via a Personal Contract Plan (PCP) or Hire Purchase (HP) deal can qualify for free maintenance in the first three years or 30,000 miles of ownership. Again, this deal applies to certain models only but does include versions of the popular Yeti SUV/crossover.

Finally, the Czech marque has made a big price-cut on one of its most popular entry models to the brand: the Fabia 1.4 SE now sells for £8,995 – a whopping £3,000 discount.

All these offers come at a time when Skoda defied the doldrums across the UK car market in 2011, posting a record registration figure of more than 45,000 cars – the third year running the VW-owned brand has beaten its own record.

It has also become an established player in the fleet market, crashing through the 2 per cent barrier for the first time.

Credit for the surge across the board goes to the Yeti and Superb – Skoda's two most recent models and proof of the firm's ambition.

Both scored highly in Driving's road tests.

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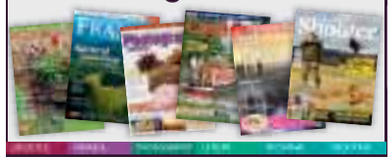

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GOLF

Picture: ADY KERRY

CUT: Claire Aitken missed out on the final round

Tour card hopes sunk by Aitken's bad round

AN AWFUL third round in final qualifying cost Claire Aitken any chance of reclaiming her card on the Ladies European Tour this season.

The Gravesend golfer headed to La Manga in southern Spain hoping to finish in the top 30 for the third time in four years.

Aitken was well on the way to achieving the feat after opening with rounds of 75 and 69 put her inside the top 20.

But disaster struck for the 25-year-old in Tuesday's third round. A torrid card included three double bogeys and six other dropped shots en route to a 12-over-par 85 on the south course which saw her plummet down the field.

Aitken improved in the fourth round on the resort's north course, but a four-over-par 75 was not good enough.

The 16-over-par total was seven shots shy of making the cut for Thursday's final round.

FOOTBALL

Picture: DAVE STEWART

PROLIFIC: Kwesi Appiah's form attracted scouts

Appiah leaks transfer "deal" on Twitter

A MOVE to the Championship appears imminent for Kwesi Appiah despite the Margate striker prematurely announcing a transfer on Twitter this week.

The former Ebbsfleet and Peterborough United player has been in superb form since joining the Blues last summer, scoring 33 goals in all competitions.

Margate revealed last week several scouts from Premier League and Championship clubs were keeping tabs on the 21-year-old.

Appiah went one step further on Monday, when he tweeted: "Margate Have agreed deal with Blackpool. Going to meet the Gaffa later in the week. Exiting stuff" [sic].

It was news to Margate, who refused to comment beyond saying no deal had been completed. The tweet was hastily taken down, but Appiah's agent was quoted saying they had a meeting with Tangerines boss Ian Holloway.

CRICKET

Early start makes an overseas trip likely as part of Kent's pre-season

By David Pritchard
david.pritchard@archant.co.uk

AN OVERSEAS training camp looks on the cards as part of Kent's pre-season preparations in response to the earliest ever start to a cricket season.

The campaign is due to begin on April 5 with their opening LV= County Championship Division Two game against Yorkshire at Headingley, three days earlier than last season.

It means outdoor pre-season training needs to begin in early March, when there will be few guarantees of dry weather to prepare pitches for friendly games.

A wet build-up to last season saw Kent make a last minute decision to take 12 players and four staff to the ICC Global Cricket Academy in Dubai. The week-long trip was described by Paul Farbrace, the county's director of cricket, as a "no brainer" due to the amount of quality time players could accumulate in the much more predictable climate.

Nothing has been booked yet, but Jamie Clifford, Kent's chief executive, felt as long as a competitive package could be found there was a good chance new head coach Jimmy Adams would have an overseas camp to help prepare the players.

"There's a practical aspect which is that practice facilities and pitch preparation in March is very difficult," he said.

"We're looking at all the various options, if that means overseas then it means overseas.

"We've factored it into our financial plans for the year and I think you have to look at pound-for-pound investment, the time the players actually get practising rather than sitting and waiting for the rain to stop or being in the indoor school probably justifies an overseas pre-season trip.

"But it's got to be done at the right price, it can't just be wherever we fancy, it's got to represent value for money. This year with the early start it's looking very likely we'll have an overseas pre-season trip."

Picture: ADY KERRY

UNPREDICTABLE: Sam Northeast in the middle during a rare dry spell in last year's pre-season

KENT'S LIVE TV GAMES 2012

KENT will have six games broadcast live on satellite television this summer after Sky Sports confirmed their schedule.

The first chance to watch Rob Key's men in action is the Clydesdale Bank 40 contest against Yorkshire on May 6. It is the only one of the six games not to be a day/night fixture.

Canterbury will host the cameras twice in June, against Warwickshire in the CB40 and the Friends Life t20 meeting with Middlesex. The latter will be preceded by a t20 international between England ladies and India ladies, which will also be live on TV.

sky SPORTS

- Yorkshire v **Kent** (CB40) Sunday, May 6 at Headingley
- **Kent** v Warwickshire (CB40) Friday, June 1 at Canterbury
- **Kent** v Middlesex (t20) Tuesday, June 26 at Canterbury
- Derbyshire v **Kent** (CB40) Tuesday, July 31 at Derby
- Warwickshire v **Kent** (CB40) Monday, August 13 at Edgbaston
- **Kent** v Yorkshire (CB40) Wednesday, August 22 at Canterbury

CRICKET/HOCKEY

Rowe understands reasons behind decision which sacrifices hockey for cricket career

Picture: ADY KERRY

TOUR: Susie Rowe is preparing for New Zealand

THE tricky balancing act of playing two different sports at a high level is over for Susie Rowe after the talented sportswoman was forced to give up playing hockey to focus on cricket.

Rowe had juggled the commitments needed to play top flight hockey with Canterbury ladies alongside featuring for Kent and England's women cricket sides.

It was a rare feat, but the dual role was ended when the England cricket management adopted a new policy on extra curricular sporting commitments.

Ahead of a demanding schedule which sees England preparing for and playing in both the Twenty20 and One Day world cups in the next 12 months, it was felt the squad could not afford to risk injury playing other sports.

It means Rowe will not be in the Canterbury side which resumes the outdoor season against Clifton next month.

She said: "You can't afford to put your body under any extra risk. I would hate to miss out on a tour because I was injured playing hockey. It's a big sacrifice because hockey's a massive part of my life, but the aim is to make it worthwhile. I'm 100 per committed to my cricket.

"It wasn't an individual decision, it was a team decision made by the management. It was out of my hands, which was probably a good thing. It's what had to be done and I fully understand it - it's just a great shame that it has happened."

Instead Rowe will head to New Zealand next month for a tour which features five Twenty20 games and three One Day Internationals.

She joined up with the rest of the international squad, which includes four other Kent players - captain Charlotte Edwards, Lydia Greenway, Laura Marsh and Tamsin Beaumont - at Edgbaston this week as preparations for the trip began in earnest.

FOOTBALL

Kuffour happy to pick Gills but Rooney flies the nest

By David Pritchard
david.pritchard@archant.co.uk

A SUCCESSFUL first spell at Priestfield was enough for Jo Kuffour to snub interest from three other clubs and rejoin Gillingham until the end of the season.

The livewire striker endeared himself to the Gills' players and fans alike by hitting seven goals from 12 starts in a three month spell on loan, which finished at the end of December.

Both parties were keen to arrange a second deal with parent club Bristol Rovers, but the 30-year-old's form provoked interest from elsewhere. The race for his signature included two of the Gills' rivals for promotion from League Two, plus one club from League One, all within reach of Kuffour's family home in London.

While the trio may have been in a position to pay higher wages, the deciding factor was the positive experience from the first spell.

"There were a couple of teams – I knew about Swindon, Crawley and Wycombe – but I was happy here," he said.

"The main thing for me now is to be happy. I'm home now and close to my family, so that was the big factor. Having been here already I knew I loved the club and the fans, so I was happy to come back.

"It's like I never left. I'm just glad it's sorted out now. It took two or three weeks but I always wanted to come back."

The stay could be a short one, though, with Kuffour only signing until the end of the campaign to keep his options open in the summer. If he maintains the scoring record from the first loan spell it may be difficult for the Gills to keep the striker if they fail to win promotion.

Kuffour said: "We'll see what happens come the end of the season. Hopefully we're in a good position and God willing out of this league.

"I just wanted to sign until the end of the season and obviously take it from there."

The signings of Kuffour and fellow forward Gavin Tomlin, joining on loan from Dagenham & Redbridge, were tempered by the loss of Luke Rooney to Swindon Town on Tuesday.

The 21-year-old had been linked with a move away since rejecting a new contract in November and the club viewed the six-figure offer from the Robins as preferable to relying on a tribunal when the winger's contract expired this summer. It led to a mixed response from Gills supporters, while Rooney expressed his eagerness to help the Robins into the Championship.

Gills boss Andy Hessenthaler said: "Luke might need a fresh challenge for his own personal development. He goes with my best wishes and good luck for the future.

"He's got a lot of ability. I've never hidden the fact at times he was hard to work with at the training ground because he was that type of player. He had a bit of an edge to him, which is a good edge. I felt he was an impact player, which he didn't agree with, but he did have a run in the team and did very well.

"Ultimately he decided he wasn't going to sign the contract and we had to react, which is what we've done. Both of us will move on."

Despite the sale, those hoping for further reinforcements before the transfer deadline closes a week on Tuesday may be disappointed.

Hessenthaler said: "I wouldn't have thought so but one thing with the chairman is he's honest with you all the time. He's pushed us to the limit on the budget."

Pictures: ADY KERRY

HELLO, GOODBYE: Jo Kuffour (left)'s love of Gillingham saw him sign, but Luke Rooney has left

FOOTBALL

Pioneering Kent Youth Council gets down to business as the FA looks on

A BOLD new policy to give young people a say on how football in the county is run began this week and is already attracting attention from the Football Association.

The Kent FA Youth Council held its inaugural meeting on Wednesday to decide which two projects it will initially focus on. Comprised of 16 members aged 11-21, it chose to look into improving standards of equipment and raising awareness of youngsters' options in the sport once they turn 16.

It was directed by Lee Suter, football development officer at the Kent County FA (KCFA), who was thrilled with the meeting and dismissed the suggestion it was putting too much responsibility on young shoulders.

"If it is they certainly didn't show it at the meeting, they were brilliant and we were enthused by them," he said.

"They came up with ideas that a room full of adults wouldn't have thought of, because their priorities are totally different.

"They are still playing youth football and we need to engage with them. We are preparing the next generation of our volunteer workforce."

The FA have taken notice and are looking into setting up a national version. Sir Trevor Brooking, director of football development at Soho Square, is among those to lend their encouragement, while the Kent system is expected to be taken up by county FAs across England.

Ricky Adams, a 21 year-old from Higham, near Strood, is the council's chairman.

He said "One of my priorities will be to make the football environment safer for young people and improve the game in all areas.

"As a qualified coach and referee, and having played football in the county for several years, I really hope I can help guide the other members of the Youth Council in a positive direction."

The council is next due to meet at the KCFA's headquarters near Aylesford in April.

YOUNG GUNS: Lee Suter (left) and the council

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL FOCUS WITH FRED ATKINS

Worrying trend of play-acting

A DECADE ago the average footballer thought that waving an imaginary card was an even worse idea than introducing his partner to John Terry, but the game, it is claimed, is in a constant state of evolution.

It doesn't take long for the behavioural patterns of Premier League stars to be replicated at various points down the food chain and there's been a decided shift in tone in the Ryman League this season.

In the top flight a minority of figures are now acting almost like professional lobbyists, who regard the truth as a side issue in the pursuit of their interests.

Ten years ago, at non-league level, this didn't go much beyond yelling "our ball" even if it was obvious to the player involved he'd got the final touch. This was cheating but it seems fairly quaint now.

In Kent, as everywhere else, some clubs took it further, showing officials sustained belligerence for 90 minutes and accusing them of bias every time a decision went against them. These teams also habitually deployed "the reducer", a tackle designed to eliminate an opponent by injuring him.

Some did this deliberately. Others regarded it as a mutually agreed activity between consenting adults.

A Kent League manager once told me they'd nicknamed a rival player "the squealer" because he'd yelp every time a challenge went in, violating the unwritten law that you didn't complain, even if someone took a chainsaw to your knee.

That era appears to be over now that new guidelines on tackling "with excessive force" have been introduced.

The Guardian's "Secret Footballer" last week cited English football's obsession with getting stuck in as a reason for the repeated failure of the national team in major tournaments, quoting the former Liverpool midfielder Xabi Alonso "tackling is a last resort and you will need it, but it isn't a quality to aspire to, a definition".

However, the concept of staying on your feet and intercepting, as opposed to lunging in and not worrying if you smash your opponent in the process, is one that might take a while to sink in lower down.

A secondary issue is as the laws evolve, so do the methods used to break them.

Acting is now the weapon of choice for the casual cheat. Player reaction used to be a fairly reliable indicator of a refereeing decision's merits, but this season I've witnessed several Ryman League matches in which players have used false outrage to persuade a referee to send an opponent off, or feigned head injuries to force referees to halt opposition attacks.

With every season that goes by my sympathy for officials who have to deal with simulation and "ungentlemanly conduct" increases.

When a government minister has to deal with nefarious lobbyists he might at least get a trip to Dubai and a Rolex for his trouble. Referees just get phlegm in the ear.

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